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PITFALLS

IN ENGLISH

A MANUAL OF
CUSTOMARY ERRORS

IN THE USE OF WORDS

BY

JOSEPH FITZGERALD, M. A.

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J. FITZGERALD & CO.
28 LAFAYETTE PLACE

Monograph

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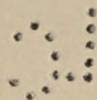
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S. M. Croft

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THOUGH this little book will speak for itself, it is no unreasonable demand that its author shall offer some proof of his competence to perform the task he has undertaken.

For quite forty years etymological and linguistic study has been for him work and play, his life's occupation and his amusement. More than twenty years he has spent in editorial labor on the North American Review, the Forum, and other publications, and besides has translated many works from foreign languages—German, French, Italian, Greek, Latin; mostly scientific works, and several of them treatises on psychology, the just rendering of which into English requires no common degree of exactness in the use of words. During the first four years of the Forum he revised in the manuscript every article but three published in that periodical, and alone bore the responsibility for their grammatical and stylistic redaction.

Hence this little volume is the work of no tiro,

IV.

PREFATORY NOTE.

amateur, or closet student of our English, but of one who has had to meet and, perforce, to solve as many of the problems of language expression as are likely to be encountered and tackled by any scholar in a lifetime. The topics are mainly such as have arisen in the author's experience as editor, redactor, and translator; thus they have the characters of actuality and pertinency.

The author's purpose in preparing this manual will not be attained unless after perusing it the reader shall be able to say that he has been put in possession of principles of etymology that safeguard him not only against the Pitfalls in English here charted, but against many similar perils which infest the whole field of our language. Or changing the figure, the author as physician attacks not so much symptoms as the diathesis, the vice of constitution which manifests itself in solecisms.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
SECTION I. INTRODUCTORY.	
A. Importance of Etymological Knowledge	7
B. English and German Vocabularies Compared	13
SECTION II. IGNORANTISMS.....	17
SECTION III. MISCELLANEOUS PHRASES..	48
SECTION IV. SYNTAX AND FOREIGNISMS.	
A. Some Points of Syntax and the Laws of Expression.....	57
B. Foreign Words in English.....	74
SECTION V. DERIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION	87
SECTION VI. FALSE LIGHTS.....	113

PITFALLS IN ENGLISH.

SECTION I. INTRODUCTORY.

A.—IMPORTANCE OF ETYMOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE.

I. SOME languages are homogeneous, others heterogeneous, the homogeneous being such as comprise a larger or smaller number of root words or radicals native in them, and of derivatives and compound words formed from those roots; the heterogeneous on the other hand being those whose roots are of diverse origin, a portion of them native, the rest, which may be an equal or a larger portion, being taken from one or many other sources. Of the first class the German language is an example, but such also is the Greek and such the Latin: of the second class the best example is the English. With exception of an inconsiderable number of radicals borrowed from extrane languages, as Latin, Greek, and other tongues, the German vocabulary is absolutely

pure and homogeneous; and were the foreign radicals to be thrown out the native resources of the German language are easily sufficient to provide adequate substitutes. English rests on a basis of Anglosaxon etymons and its syntax is of native origin; but the words of its vocabulary are very largely of a different origin, coming mainly from the Latin either direct or through the Norman French. That does not mean that of the words used in discourse one-half or any such large proportion would be of Latin-French origin; for the words of relation (prepositions, conjunctions) and other necessary parts of the language's machinery being of home origin, the native elements necessarily have the chief role to play when the language is in action.

2. Of the 250 words in the foregoing paragraph many are repeated several times, hence 250 is not the number of different words in it. Of different words, each counted once only, and such words as French, Latin, etc., not reckoned, there are about 83: of these about 35 are of Anglosaxon or Germanic origin, and about 48 come from Latin, French, etc. Of the 250 words and repetitions of words 145 are Anglosaxon or Germanic.

3. These thirty-five words of Germanic origin are more homely to us than the forty-eight: we understand and speak Are, Other, Being, Such,

Small, With, Word, long before the meaning of Language, Consist, Radical, Native, Derivative, Compound, dawns on our intelligence. In a homogeneous language all the words are of the order of Are, Speak, Tongue, Be, With, Word. It is seen that the acquisition of words and word meanings must be incomparably easier in homogeneous than in heterogeneous tongues. The comparative ease or difficulty of acquiring the vocabulary of English or German, respectively, will be the subject-matter of a few paragraphs in the second part of this section: a consideration that finds apt place here is the much more logical and orderly growth and development of a homogeneous language as regards, not acquisition of new words by the learner, but acquisition of new meanings by words.

4. In German all the elements are of domestic origin and the precise meaning of each, whether singly or in sesquipedalian compounds, is understood as well by peasant as by philosopher. Hence in German no one will venture to inject into a word a new meaning which its elements will not bear. In English the etymological value of roots, whether Anglosaxon or Latin, is known and determined, but in most cases for the learned alone: hence when new meanings attach to words no one but the learned is competent to say

whether the acquisition of meanings is legitimate or not. The line of derivation of German words is seen in each word: the deflections or the developments in meaning can also be seen in the words themselves. In Buch (book) the German sees Buche (the Beech, the bark of which once served for paper), and such a word as Buchsucht (craze for books, bibliomania) needs for him no interpreter. The pedigree of every legitimately coined English word is also plainly inscribed on its front, but it is not writ in English, and it needs interpretation to make it understood by those who are not acquainted with the antecedents in other languages.

5. In no other language, of the civilized world at least, is this interpretation so necessary as in our English. It is not so necessary in French, for the French has preserved the tradition of the Latin etymologies, and of the Latin syntax in some degree. Latin once was a living language in France, never in England, or if in a few Roman colonies and garrison towns in Britain Latin was spoken from the time of Julius Caesar to the coming of the Anglosaxons, that barbarian invasion swept away all trace of it, so that when Augustin appeared all memory of Roman domination had faded away. When a Latinish tongue came in with the Norman conquerors its vocabulary was

by degrees appropriated by the whole population, but the vocabulary only: the syntax and the etymological tradition never took root in England, and hence the Norman French words, however allied among themselves, and however self-interpreting to those who had the etymological tradition, were virtually for the Saxon people of England unrelated and independent radicals: consequently those words took on new meanings that often had no justification in etymology, and grammatical anarchy and chaos prevailed. This is as true of the Anglosaxon as of the Norman French elements of the English language: the invasion of the Normans threw the Anglosaxon etymological system into confusion.

6. Nevertheless only by tracing our words back to their original forms and uses can we give ourselves a rational account of their import. It is not asserted that so only are we enabled to employ our English words with propriety, for some of the best models of pure and proper English are the writings of men acquainted with no language but the Mothertongue. Is it useless then to acquire knowledge of the etymology of our English, seeing that such knowledge is not necessary for the highest mastery of its resources of forceful expression? Not any more useless than it is for a person to put himself under an in-

structor in the art of playing a musical instrument, though some very remarkable performers have been easily self-taught or even have acquired the art apparently without study or effort. Some there are who, though they have dug every word root of our language out of the soil in which it first grew, cannot write a sentence of passably good English. But it does not follow that therefore a knowledge of etymologies is useless. For perhaps the majority of learners the easiest and the only way of getting at the true signification of words is through their etymological history.

7. So much for etymological study as a means. As an end the study of English etymologies is quite as profitable and as honorable a pursuit and as worthy of strenuous effort as the study of entomology, to say the least. But one is not disposed to content oneself with saying the least. Language is a principal department of the Science of Man. Needless to say that without language there cannot be any science of man or of anything; it is not quite so needless to say that without profound study of speech our Science of Man will be left in a very imperfect state indeed. Speech is inseparably bound up with thought, so that without words thought is impossible and inconceivable. While we study these etymological monuments of our language therefore we are

prosecuting a strictly scientific investigation, unless indeed in our researches we spurn the methods of scientific inquiry.

B. ENGLISH AND GERMAN VOCABULARIES
COMPARED.

8. IN a very authoritative work on the Russian people, their manners, morals, and characteristics, it is gravely affirmed that Russians may any day be heard disputing about such propositions as that At the North Pole there is sempiternal ice, that A stone let drop from the hand will fall to earth. That latter proposition of course might be demonstrated on the spot experimentally; but the Russian nature prefers to decide all questions on high metaphysical grounds and experiment has no place in that field. The story is more than half true told of ourselves. Who has not heard the question discussed, taking part himself perhaps, whether English is easier or harder to learn than some other language, for instance German? The Russian moozhiks and shopkeepers are still thrashing the straw of controversies settled for the rest of mankind a thousand years ago and capable of determination now, even by themselves, as quick as saying Presto! Our

own debate on the relative easiness or difficulty of English and German is also carried on over a matter decided just about a thousand years ago and capable of being decided again to the satisfaction of the least-instructed person, if we will but make a very simple experiment.

9. The question of easiness or difficulty has regard to the vocabularies of the two languages, at least that is the view of the disputants in the everlasting debate. That language is easiest whose vocabulary is acquired in least time. Now apply the test. Here is the title of a work in German: "Menschenhass und Reue," that is, Misanthropy and Repentance. Speak to any German-speaking child of four years the words Menschenhass and Reue, and most positively he will understand what is meant by the first word, and almost as certainly what is meant by the second. Pronounce the two words Misanthropy and Repentance in the hearing of an English-speaking child of four years, and if he understands their meaning you have something little short of miraculous. Why so? Because the German child already possesses the elements of the word Menschenhass, namely Mensch (human being) and Hass (hate), and in all probability he knows the meaning of Reue (of the same origin as the Eng. verb to rue, noun ruth). Mensch, Hass, Reue

the child learns as he learns Mama, Papa, Bread: but the elements of the word Misanthropy are not given to one in ten thousand English-speaking persons either in babyhood, youth or age: there is nothing English in it, nor is there anything English in the word Repentance.

10. Really the problem is solved by that simple experiment; further proof is only repetition. But pursue the experiment a little way; though superfluous it will perhaps be instructive and entertaining. The infant child of German parents early learns the meaning of the word Haus (house), and knowing so much has no difficulty in understanding the signification of the derivative words Haeuslich (domestic), Hausfriede (domestic peace, Friede, peace), and a host of other derivatives and compounds. But the infant learning to speak English, in order to get as many terms as his little German coequal, must in addition to the word House understand the meaning of the adjective Domestic. Whoever knows the two German words Hand and Schrift (hand and writing) is at no loss to understand Handschrift. But though the Anglic child understands Hand and Writing he finds in that no help to the understanding of Manuscript. Such a big word as Independent is readily intelligible to a German child (Unabhaengig); the German child that would re-

quire to be taught the meaning of Unabhaengig would be an exceptionally stupid one; the Anglic child of four or five years who should grasp untaught the meaning of Independent would be a prodigy. Even the notion expressed in English by the word Obsolescent would be easy of comprehension to a German child: the word Veraelternd needs no interpretation, it is impossible to express the notion in a simpler form; no synonym, no phrase, could make it plainer. The most ignorant German peasant necessarily understands untaught the German word for Immortality (unsterblichkeit), Inviolability (unverletzbarkeit), Philanthropic (menschenfreundlich), Philology (sprachkunde), and so on. Not less great is the advantage enjoyed by the speaker of German in the using of words. The wholly untaught and unletterd German peasant, if the idea (not the word) of Philology were given him, would at once name it as correctly as any scholar. What English-speaking man of even considerable education could do as much?

II. From these examples—and they are typical—one may reasonably conclude that the mastering of the English vocabulary is at the very lowest estimate twice as difficult as the mastering of the German. Another obvious conclusion is that a defining dictionary is far less necessary to German than to English-speaking people.

SECTION II. IGNORANTISMS.

12. IN dictionaries Ignorantism is given as a synonym of Obscurantism and as meaning a system of ecclesiastical or governmental paternalism designed to keep the common people in the contentment of ignorance. Here it will be used to denote a solecism committed by one who is supposed to be or affects to be well educated. In the list of Ignorantisms here following are entered some forms of expression that have established themselves in "good use", for example, Diatribe, Empiric. Such words and phrases are cited here only as examples of successful pretenders holding their places in the language not by merit but through prescription. Their titles are bad, but the tribunal of usage has passed upon them and recognized them, and it is vain to call them in question now. Ignorantism is the great corrupter of language, and in no language does it work so much mischief as in our English, for in no other language are the prime meanings of vocables so

obscured as in ours. Our dictionaries are to a great extent simply registers of Ignorantisms, and by registration Ignorantisms get a colorable title to a place among legitimate words and phrases. But whether they have in their favor prescription or only this registration, no man of acute literary sense and conscience will receive with cordiality phrases that have stood in the pillory and been branded Interloper, though they may pass among the unknowing for grandees. Many phrases that might rightfully find a place in this section will be found in Section III.

13. Conservative is a word that is absurdly misused by newspaper writers and in conversation. "Pigs' feet is ruz awful, a conservative estimate is three cents apiece by the joblot." Wherever Conservative is used in any sense but that of preserving or tending to preserve from waste, loss, injury, degeneration, deterioration, decay, or the like, it is used solecistically, ignorantly, slangily.

14. Phenomenon. The man who first used this word and its derivate Phenomenal in the sense of Something very remarkable or unusual, gave a palmary example of a Vulgar Error. In philosophy and in science Phenomenon means only Appearance; or, in its largest sense, that which is cognizable by the senses. One can hardly be in error in tracing the perverted meaning of Phe-

nomenon to the lecture hall in which the man of science or the popularizer of physical science would announce beforehand one of his experiments by saying: "The Phenomenon you are now to witness," etc.; and as the ignorant (though, of course, "educated") audience would the next moment see some striking effect of mixture of chemicals, or some miracle of electricity, they would naturally suppose that Phenomenon meant "scientific miracle." Some reputable authors have inadvertently employed the terms in this vulgar sense: but that must never avail to consecrate the Ignorantism.

15. Teem (v.) means to bring forth young as an animal or fruit as a plant; to be prolific; to be full-stocked. But the chief manager of a great trunkline of railroad speaks of the line "teeming with trains."

16. Wage (v.) One nation wages or carries on a war against another, and war may be Waged, but it is an Ignorantism to say The war wages. Etymologically, to Wage is to put at hazard, to bet, to wager, hence, to take chances, as with war, to venture a war, finally it means to carry on war. The word is of the same origin as Wage or Wages, and Gage is its double, g being substituted for w, as in Guarantee, Warranty.

17. Attract, Attraction. What is the rationale

of the use of Attract in such a phrase as He was attracted to the position by the desire to study humanity, or Attracted to the support of the measure by the belief that, etc.? We do not say that a steamboat is attracted to a point forward in her course by her engines; she is propelled. In the phrase above, the desire to study humanity is an impelling or propelling force, not an attractive. The force of attraction we figure to ourselves as residing in the body to which another body is attracted or pulled, e. g., in the loadstone to which iron filings are attracted. In short, Attraction is Pulling not Pushing, and the form of phrase given above is illegitimate, and not to be used whatever "authority" may be quoted for it.

18. Venerable is commonly misused as synonymous with Aged, so that in sober earnest a hoary old villain is spoken of as Venerable. Venerable means worthy of reverence and that only. It is true that the epithet Venerable, when applied to persons, has a sort of subaudition of age: we should not characterize as Venerable a man of thirty years however worthy of veneration he might be for his virtues and grandeur of character. A child of five years is a man, as being a member of the human race, and may possess a masterful intellect; but we should not say of that child that he is "a man of high intellectual powers."

19. Share (v. intrans.) is properly used only when the one who shares gets or takes a share in something participated in by himself and others. But we do not "share" in a conference. We may share in a banquet, or in an estate, or in a bequest, but we do not share in a public meeting.

20. Entail. This verb has a very definite technical meaning, and the essence of that meaning is the unalterableness for evermore of the disposition of an estate made by a deed of gift. From that meaning of the verb and noun Entail any departure that does not preserve that root feature of unalterableness is illegitimate. It is truly and legitimately said that Intemperance entails on progeny infirmities and diseases. But it is ridiculous to say The glut in the market entails on us the necessity of getting rid of our stock of wooden nutmegs at three cents a dozen.

21. Co-Respondent. In a suit for divorce brought by husband against wife there cannot be more than one respondent, the wife. The wife's paramour is not a respondent, not a party to the suit at all. This dictum applies to the latitude and longitude of New York, yet in the New York daily newspapers the paramour of the respondent in divorce cases is always called Co-Respondent.

22. Cyclopedia, Encyclopedia. Between these

two forms there is the difference of a syllable in pronouncing, printing, or writing; otherwise they are one word and are identical in meaning: Cyclopedia is the less correct form. If there can be a Cyclopedia of sausage making, the same will be an Encyclopedia of that art and mystery. It is a Vulgar Error and Ignorantism to discern any difference of import between Cyclopedia and Encyclopedia.

23. Excelsior. If one of the ancient Romans were to revisit earth, making the descent at New York, should he happen to notice the "armorial bearings" of New York State, the thing that would strike him first would undoubtedly be the motto Excelsior. He would probably call it a "strange device," using the very same phrase our Longfellow uses in his poem with the strange title. Perhaps some of the natives, to enlighten the visitor from afarback, would interpret for him Longfellow's poem and so acquaint him with the import of that word of "an unknown tongue." But after all was said and done, the Ancient probably would still be asking just what that "strange device," that motto in Latin form but unintelligible to an Old Roman, might mean. For truly, though Excelsior is a Latin word it has not the meaning given to it in the poem. The bearer of the "banner with the strange device,"

had he known a little bit of Latin, would have had "Sursum" for his device, not Excelsior.

24. Consensus of Opinion. Opinion or Opinions as equivalent to "the general opinion" seems to have gone clean out of use, being superseded by the phrase Consensus of Opinion. Consensus means agreement in opinions, judgments, etc., and hence if the Latin word is to be used it would best stand alone. If standing alone Consensus means agreement in opinions, then the too familiar phrase means "agreement in opinions of opinion," not a very neat expression. A slight improvement in the current formula might be effected by writing Consensus of Opinions: that at least would give the indispensable basis for "Consensus", namely, two or more opinions. In one opinion there is neither Consensus nor Dissensus, agreement nor disagreement.

25. Standing, Estimation, and words of like import are often used improperly in the sense of high standing, high estimation. The word Esteem, both as noun and verb, and the adjective Estimable have acquired the denotation of favorable regard, and that fact undoubtedly indicates a tendency of language. But though such tendency exists and is in some degree inevitable, the best usage will withstand it to the last, for it unsettles the values of words and impairs the power

of unequivocal expression. "Standing" properly means, in the metaphorical sense, the place or station a man occupies, whether of honor or of disgrace. "Estimation" expresses the judgment we form of a man, neither flattering nor depreciative but simply according to fact and evidence.

26. *Prestigiator. Prestidigitator. Thus are these two words printed in a great dictionary. Against Prestigiator is set an asterisk as a note of obsolescence, while Prestidigitator passes unchallenged, though it is plainly the coinage of some mountebank who thought that Prestidigitation would neatly express sleight of hand (*praesto*, ready, and *digiti*, fingers). Prestige is from Lat. *praestigium*, and in Warburton (Queen Anne's time) is used to designate jugglery: "the sophisms of infidelity and the Prestiges of imposture." Warburton evidently treated Prestige as an English word, and would no more have pronounced it *presteezh* than he would have pronounced *Vestige vesteezh*. The Lat. *praestigium* has the same sense: trick, sleight of hand. The corresponding word for a practicer of sleight of hand was *Praestigiator* (feminine, *Praestigiatrix*), and the verb was *Praestigior*. The business of a *Praestigiator* was *Praestigiatio*. But now comes the charlatan on the stage and at his word *Presto!* the whole suite of good English words, Prestige,

Prestigation, Prestigate, Prestigator, Prestigiatory (Barrow: "prestigiatory tricks") slink away and twiddling Prestidigitation with its train succeeds to their place. The word now commonly pronounced presteezh is the very same that Warburton used, but in its new sense of "confidence-inspiring effect of prior achievement" it is got from the French.

27. Identify. The use of Identified in such a phrase as He was identified in mining interests with Gould, is an Ignorantism. The proper word would be Associated, Connected, or the like. Correct usage gives no sanction to the employment of Identify in that sense. One may "identify himself with the common people" or with the uncommon people, that is, make himself one of them, the same (*idem*) with them. Two men who ply the oars of a boat are as much identified in that work as two sharpers who "work" a mine in company: there is in neither case Identification.

28. Phalanx means a body of armed men, usually an oblong square, in closest order. The adjective in the phrase Solid Phalanx is superfluous, for unless the battalion is solid it is no Phalanx. The Macedonian Phalanx was a square battalion of pikemen, having sixteen men in flank and five hundred in front, standing so

compact that the pikes of the fifth rank reached three feet beyond the front.

29. The use of Magnate to designate a man prominent in exploiting horse-racing, pugilism, baseball playing, and the like is slangy.

30. Balance. It is using the language of the shop, pidgin English, and a mere vulgarism to employ this word in the sense of Remainder: I will send the Balance of the tripe to-morrow. When the fishmonger is selling sprats and his scales are not in equipoise, he throws in one more sprat, and that sprat may without doing violence to propriety of language be called the Balance. But even a fishmonger might hesitate to call that part of an order for sprats which he fills by supplementary delivery the Balance.

31. Posted, or Well Posted, in the sense of Well Informed, or instructed, learned, or well read, is slangy and shoppy, smelling of daybook and ledger.

32. Dead Letter. This phrase doubtless had its origin in the contrast between the letter of the law, which "killeth," and the spirit, which "giveth life." In an obsolete law the letter remains, but the life and spirit are gone out of it: it is dead. The phrase Dead Letter is used in two other senses, both entirely different from the foregoing, viz.: to denote a letter in the postoffice that can-

not be delivered to the person for whom it was intended; and in some printing offices to denote type ready for distribution. In a sense slightly different from that given in the first place above a law or regulation that is inoperative is a "dead letter." These are all legitimate uses of the phrase, but in the following sentence it is ignorantly used in a sense justified by no analogy: The formation of companies is practically a dead letter.

33. Vivid. In a manifesto of a semi-public body occurs the phrase Vividly Justify. An impression on the mind may be vivid, something that lives, that does not quickly fade away. Colors that are bright are rightly qualified as vivid: they are alive. A description of a battle may be called vivid if it suggests to the imagination the actual phases of the combat. In short, vivid (Lat. *vividus*, living, animate) means lively, lifelike; and as no one would ever think of saying "a lifelike judgment," so one cannot rightly say "a vivid judgment," nor "vividly justify."

34. Secure (v.) is one of the words that are overworked. It comes from the Lat. adjective *Securus*, our Eng. adjective *Secure*, which means primarily free from care or anxiety. Hence the first meaning of the verb would be to make safe, as from danger to life or against theft, etc. Deriv-

ative senses are, to make fast so that a thing shall not fall from its place; to make sure, to put beyond doubt; to give warrant of the safety of a thing, hence to insure; finally, by a process not very readily traceable, to get possession, obtain. It is in this last sense that the word is overworked. We no longer get, obtain, or come into possession of, or procure: we always nowadays secure a situation, secure a bargain, secure a meal or a theatre ticket, nay, even we secure securities.

35. Hypothesis is a Greek word identical both in its composition and meaning with the Lat. word *Suppositio*, whence Eng. *Supposition*. The *hypo* and the *sub* (*sup*) both mean Under and the *thesis* and the *positio* mean putting or placing. And as there is in English no verb derivative of *Hypothesis*, except the awkward and ill-sounding *Hypothesize*, the verb meaning "to make hypothesis," "to assume hypothetically," has to be got from the Lat. verb *Suppono*, to suppose, or from some other source, as the verb *Assume*. *Hypothecate* is often ignorantly used as an active-verbal form of *Hypothesis*; but *Hypothecate* means and means only to lay down as a pledge or security.

36. *Depreciate*, *Deprecate*. These two words give frequent occasion for Partingtonisms, one being used instead of the other. An instance

occurs while these notes on words are accumulating. A distinguished man of letters in a communication to the starchiest of American evening newspapers, writes: Much as I depreciate any unnecessary delay. What he meant to write, or what he should have written, was Deprecate; and it is hardly doubtful that his copy had Deprecate, made Depreciate by the compositor who set the matter in type. But less learned persons may perhaps need a hint as to the distinction between the words. That distinction is found in their etymology: Depreciate (Lat. de, off, down, away, and pretium, price, prize) means to undervalue. Deprecate (Lat. de, away, precor, to pray) means "to pray a thing away," to pray against a thing. Such are the original meanings of the two words: with these in mind one is in no danger of using one for the other.

37. Polite. The use of Depreciate for Deprecate by a man of high literary standing was beyond a doubt either a mere slip of the pen, or a typist's error, or a compositor's mistake. But a still brighter light in the literary firmament, a man who stood in the foremost rank of literati, when "taken in the act" of deriving our adjective Polite from the Gr. word Polites (citizen) made a very disingenuous defense, saying it was a slip of the pen or (and here he used a then newly

coined word) a Heterophemy: in truth it was a case of being lured by False Lights. Now Heterophemy is when a man wishing to speak one word utters another and different one, e. g. says Green when he means Red. Heterophemy is a good and serviceable word, but it did not apply at all in the case of Polites and Polite. The distinguished litterateur "meant to say the other word": but he forgot to tell us what that other word was. The defense was weak, it was sneaking; his offense was an Ignorantism, but the learned word Heterophemy got him acquittal from a very lenient court, even as bediamonded pilferers and shoplifters have been acquitted on the plea of kleptomania. No woman wearing a dollar shawl ever pleaded kleptomania in abatement; no court would listen to her nonsense. And no Grub street poet could excuse his ignorance of elementary Greek by alleging his Heterophemy. The Eng. word Polite comes from the Lat. participle Politus of the verb Polio, to smooth, furbish, polish. "Polite Letters" means elegant literature, belles lettres, as distinguished from scientific writing, technical discourse, etc. Politeness means social polish.

38. Civil, Civility. The eminent poet, humorist, and essayist whose surprising slip in Greek was so benignly condoned, made in the same es-

say or address quite as big a slip in Latin, led astray again by False Lights; but his critic either failed to detect that or chose not to animadvert upon it. In a letter to the editor of the journal in which the erroneous derivation of Polite was first pointed out, another critic showed that the distinguished author's etymological argument to prove that Civility is also a product of City life was hardly less faulty than his derivation of Polite. It is true that Civil, Civility (Lat., civilis, civilitas) are derivatives of Lat. Civis, which means citizen. But in Latin no more than in English does Citizen (civis) mean freeman of a city: rather less in Latin than in English, for whereas locally Citizen or "cit" is used to signify freeman or denizen of a city, as distinguished from inhabitant of the country, it never had that narrower meaning in Latin. Citizen and Countryman are opposite terms in English, never in Latin. Hence etymologically considered, Civility is not a product of city life, but of life in a regulated community or State. The distinguished author was no doubt in the right, as a matter of fact, in regarding the city as the cradle of civilization, freedom and enlightenment: but his argument from etymology was invalid. It was an Ignorantism. The derivation of Urbane, Urbanity, from Lat. Urbs (city) and its adjective Urbanus was

correct both etymologically and historically. In Latin Urbanus, inhabitant of a city, was used in opposition to Rusticus, countryman. If any etymological argument from the Greek is needed to support the thesis that liberty, enlightenment, civilization are the product of city life, it is enough to know that without Polis (city) there had never been Politeia or well-ordered government.

39. Wreak. This verb is the same as the German verb *Raechen*, to avenge; and in German *Rache* is vengeance. The phrase "wreak vengeance" is a pleonasm and tautology like "die death." After the root meaning of Wreak was lost in English, the word began to be used in the sense of "executing"; thus Milton has "Wreak my wrath." But the verb is now hardly used at all except in conjunction with the noun vengeance—Wreaking vengeance. Pope gives an instance of Wreak used in its true original sense—to avenge:

On her own son to wreak her brother's death;
but also an instance of its tautological use:

Wreak my vengeance on one guilty land.
King James's Bible has not the word Wreak: there vengeance is "taken" or "executed."

40. Affiliate with its derivatives is often used ignorantly and blunderously in the sense of Fraternizing or Associating. In such use of the word

there seems to be an underlying erroneous notion that the element "fil" (Lat. *filius* means brother or perhaps that Filiate implies the idea of Family and hence of familiar association. There is no such phrase known to correct usage as "to affiliate with". Affiliation is a term of the Roman law and denotes the act of one who adopts another as his son; the same act is expressed by the verb: always Affiliation is the act of the one who makes the other his son; never the act of the one who assumes to the other the relation of sonship. In the English common law Affiliation means the assignment of a "natural" illegitimate child to its father. Filiation as an Eng. law term has the same meaning as Affiliation; outside of law it is used to express the relation of son to father, and is equivalent to Sonship.

41. Handicap. As gamblers' slang presses into the literary vocabulary it should be saved from corruption. It is sad to notice Handicap employed by a writer in the public press in the sense of lack of the qualities that win a race for horse or jockey. The horse supposed to possess advantage of age or strength or fleetness is the one that has to bear the extra weight; but in the following sentence it is the inferior animal that is "handicapped": "Our young men may be better looking than their competitors" in the race for a

wife; "may wear better clothes, be more attractively wicked, and quite as useless; but the Handicap is too much". The "handicap" is that "they have no pedigree nor coat of arms, and so are out of the race". Not only is this "handicap" not a handicap, but there is no question whatever either of handicap or race, since only one runner (and he has a walkover) is on the track: the rest are "out of the race."

42. Abhorrent. An eminent jurist and statesman a few years ago characterized the unrestricted powers of aggregated capital as Abhorrent forces, meaning "worthy of abhorrence." Good usage does not authorize employment of the word in that sense. Properly Abhorrent means "feeling strong aversion", as "He would abhorrent turn"; or figuratively it denotes a similar aversion on the part of things, as when we say Nature abhors a vacuum, or that a given philosophical view is "abhorrent from the vulgar". Darwin uses the word improperly: Abhorrent to our ideas of fitness, Abhorrent gladiatorial exhibitions. When it is desired to express the idea intended by Abhorrent in this last phrase of Darwin's and by the same word in the phrase "abhorrent forces" correct usage would require substitution of some such word as Abominable or Execrable, which would render the idea adequately. But if Abhor-

rent seem to possess any special grace or force, then it might be slightly changed by making it end with d instead of t, on the model of not a few good words, as Ordinand, Multiplicand, Dividend. The only objection that could lie against Abhorrend would be that it is not in the dictionaries: but that is no valid objection to a perfectly good, significant, and duly minted vocable. Get it once into print and all the dictionaries will have it in their next edition; not because it is a good and true word, but for the old-Adamic reason that each one knows that its neighbor will have it, and all editors are loath to suffer a "beat."

43. Peculiarly and Particularly. Perhaps a humorist is not held by the ordinary laws of language. If that is so it were best (for the English language) that he were read only by the educated, by those who are likely to see wherein for humorous ends he uses a humorist's license, and who, therefore, will not make the mistake of accepting his words and phrases as grammatically lawful. Less instructed readers will be unable to separate the licentious from the legitimate, and will import into their language of conversation, and so into the body of the spoken language, solecisms, vulgarisms, ignorantisms, and wilfulnesses of speech that will disgrace the Mother-tongue. Such abnormities are caught up all too

readily by the "bright young fellows" of the daily newspapers, who put them in print. Once in print the competing word-bookmakers shovel them into their omniumgatherums, and thenceforth for ever they have right of citizenship in the English language. Several of the faulty phrases censured in these notes are taken from the writings of one of our great American humorists, but never from his professedly "humoristic" performances. Only when he doffs motley and assumes the air of a sober instructor of the people does his use of the people's language become matter for serious criticism. It was while enacting that role that he wrote of some one as being "Peculiarly and Particularly himself." If that phrase has any meaning it must be this, that "in his properties (or characteristics) and in his individuality he is himself." In all probability it means simply "he is himself" and no more: the Peculiarly and the Particularly are added humoristically. But why does the editor of a respectable review permit such outrages on the English language?

44. Transpire in the sense of Happen is a hideous Ignorantism. Its pedigree is short and ignoble. Expire means to draw the last breath, to give up the breath or ghost, to die. Transpire means literally "to emit through the excretories of the skin"; figuratively, to ooze out as a secret

does through closed doors and thick walls; hence, to have vent, to escape. Some inattentive reader of such passages as this from Cowper:

Pierced with a thousand wounds I yet survive;
My pangs are keen, but no complaint transpires—
taking Transpires as equivalent to Ensues or Follows, began himself to use the word in that sense, and the meaning of “happening” was only one short step lower. The Latin has no verb Transpiro.

45. Refer, Allude. These two verbs are synonymous in their use as terms to express mere mention of a subject-matter in discourse. They both denote passing attention to or mention of some matter, never anything like discussion of it. Yet in common usage, both in speaking and writing, the subject of a discourse or the very sum and substance of a labored argument is spoken of as the subject “referred to” by writer or speaker. “Refer” seems to be ousting by degrees from conversational use such verbs as Mention, Recite; e. g., “The train of events referred to by the speaker as accounting for,” etc. A very remarkable instance of misuse of the verb Allude is seen in the form of contract for supply of gold coin between the Rothschilds and other bankers on one side and the Secretary of the Treasury on the other (1895). Toward the end of the docu-

ment, after the nature of the bonds to be given by the Treasury has been defined with all minuteness, those very bonds are mentioned as "the bonds here"—in the contract—"alluded to." In view of the manner in which the loan was negotiated, the drawer-up of the contract might be pardoned had he "alluded" to the transaction as "this funny business."

46. Place (v.) means literally to put in a place. Figuratively, it has an analogous sense. But in whatever sense it is used, there must always be something which toward another thing will stand in a relation more or less like the relation of a place to an object existing in it. Hence Place (v.) is not in all points the same in denotation as Put or Set. We may "put" a telegraph line in operation or "set" it in operation: we cannot "place" it in operation nor "place" a clock a-going.

47. Sleuth denotes primarily the track or footprint of a living creature, hence Sleuthhound is a hound that tracks an animal. In the terminology of the chase of the deer Sleuth takes the form Slot. A cant sobriquet of a detective is Old Sleuth, and in a semi-humorous vein the newspapers often call a detective a "sleuth." It is not yet too late to prevent the word from getting currency in that abusive sense.

48. Pleasant (of weather). Fair or agreeable

weather may rightly be called Pleasant weather. But It is pleasant to-day, is not allowable. It would seem that attributively and predicatively the epithet Pleasant may be with perfect propriety applied to weather, day, etc., but not when the same notions are expressed by "It."

49. Place, Situation, Position. Place, Situation, have long been used to denote permanent employment; to them, for expressing the same notion, has been added the word Position. As the term Placeman proves, the word Place in this sense once denoted the most coveted of all employments—a situation under the Government. But to-day, except in that word Placeman and in a few consecrated phrases, Place as a designation of the opportunity of employment is used only in speaking of the employment of a domestic servant. The clerk, the mechanic, the day laborer, the sempstress, the female clerk in a retail store, may fill Situations, or even desire Situations; but Places, never. Workers of the clerkly sort prefer to speak of their employments as Positions.

50. Abstruse (Latin *abs-trudo*, *abstrusum*, thrusting away, hiding away) designates the character of a subject of study which is far out of the beaten tracks, recondite. The epithet is properly applied only to objects of study, not to the student or the researcher. It is used improperly

in this phrase: "I know Judge G—— to be abstruse and unusually well read."

51. Sodden. Whatever the weight of seeming authority for the use of this word in the sense of "soaked" no one of quick unblunted etymological conscience will use it in such abusive sense. Sodden is the past participle of the verb which we now spell Seethe, and it means primarily seethed, boiled.

52. Reeking. It is not easy to determine the meaning given to this word in the phrase Reeking with filth—probably "glutted", "choked", "obstructed", or "covered." But the word has no such meaning at all. The noun Reek is the same word as the German Rauch, which means Smoke, and the verb has the same denotation. Shakespeare has:

As reek o' the rotten fens; whose breath I hate.
And he has:

Her face doth reek and smoke.

But then he has also:

With reeky (dirty?) shanks;

which shows that he was not always alive to the etymology of Reek. Even Shakespeare is no authority when he violates the laws. "Reeking with filth" is an inadmissible form of expression. We may say The filth reeks, or, The filth of the

streets reeks, or, The streets are reeking—if, indeed, their filth is giving forth visible and odorable effluvia.

53. Tantalize means, not to tease and worry one in any and every way, but only “by presenting something desirable to the view, while continually frustrating the expectation by keeping it out of reach.” The verb “crystallizes” the story of Tantalus, dying of thirst though merged to the lips in water.

54. Flippant. In two manifestoes published on the same day by two high officials of a railroad company the one spoke of Flippant bail, the other of Trivial bail, meaning insufficient bail, bail in too trivial a sum. Flippant is properly used to qualify either the behavior of persons or their manner of utterance, and it denotes pertness and volubility. It cannot with propriety be applied as an epithet to bail. “Trivial bail” is not open to such objection, though “Trifling bail” would be better.

55. Host. When Host is used in the sense of “a multitude” aggregation is always implied, and the members of the Host are conceived as standing together or thronging. The divisions of political geography do not throng though their populations may swarm. Hence it is an improper use of the word Host to say, In a host of counties drought prevails.

56. Bifurcate Dilemma, a phrase used by a noted social reformer, shows rather command of a multiplicity of words than understanding of their true import. Whoever says Dilemma by that one word says Bifurcate (two forked, or rather two pronged), the Dilemma being "an argument in which an adversary is held between two difficulties."

57. Cover (v.). Even though a man be a giant in stature, girth, and avoirdupois, it is absurd of him to say, I have covered the city, meaning explored, or canvassed the city, visited it in every part.

58. Vim. The boundless tolerance of dictionaries is well exemplified in their admission to their vocabularies of such doglatin slang as the word Vim—"with a vim." It occurs in one of the greatest of modern English dictionaries without any mention of its slanginess. No note is there to warn the unwary that the word is a mere Ignorantism, but the asterisk is prefixed as in the case of obsolete words or meanings. Vim is no obsolete word. It never was, and never should be an English word.

59. Fruition seems to be losing its true meaning, viz., Use and enjoyment, and to be taking on the sense of Fruitage, a meaning not given it by any writer of passable competence in the use

of English. The word is from the same root as our English "fruit", and that from Lat. *Fructus*, which means both the use and enjoyment of a thing, and the thing which is used or enjoyed, as agricultural produce. But *Fruition* does not signify the act of a tree in producing apples or pears, and that is the meaning now vulgarly given to the word, e. g.: "When the scheme comes to *Fruition*," e. g., begins to yield profit; "The *Fruition* of his hopes", i. e., the fulfillment.

60. *Extra*. This word or prefix is very commonly used in conversation and in newspapers in the same sense as *Super*, *Supra*, and the Gr. prefix *Hyper*. Thus we hear *Extra-good*, *Extra-cheap*. The true force of *Extra* is seen in the word *Extraordinary*, which, instead of denoting a greater ordinariness means "out of the ordinary." A few examples will show the native import of the prefix: *Extradition*, giving up to an outside authority; *Extrajudicial*, out of the ordinary course of judicial proceeding; *Extralogical*, lying outside the province of logic; *Extramundane*, outside the system of the sensible universe; *Extraregular*, beyond rules. The abuse of *Extra* has gone so far that many readers will probably be surprised to learn that in correct usage *Extra* never has the effect of enhancing the meaning of the word to which it is prefixed. Almost as ob-

jectionable a use of the word Extra as the one just mentioned is seen in the hybrid word patched (not coined) by E. B. Tylor, viz., Extra-historic, meaning outside of history proper. Here the fault is not that Extra is used out of its etymological sense, for it is not, but that a Latin element is coupled with a Greek when a Greek element might conveniently have been used. The right prefix here would have been Ex (exo), Gr., having the same meaning as Extra. Exhistoric is the correct form.

61. Diatribe. The invidious meaning of this word did not attach to it till long after its introduction into our language. Diatribe is Greek, and means literally Rubbing, and figuratively, thorough discussion of a subject, hence a set and studied treatise. Authors in the 16th and 17th centuries used to entitle their critical studies "diatribes", never meaning by that term anything in the nature of invective, abuse, or reviling. Thus we have a commentary on the Gospel of Mark spoken of as "that excellent Diatriba on Saint Mark." There is no doubt that the now received meaning of Diatribe is due to the violence with which scholars in the 16th and 17th centuries used to assail their rivals in learning, taking every possible occasion to prove their opponents dunces and falsifiers.

62. Political Policy. The author of "Bifurcate Dilemma" is sponsor for the phrase Political Policy, in which both words are debased to their vulgarest meaning, Political being taken to mean "pertaining to the pothouse politician", and Policy to denote the low tricks and devices of such schemers. How shall the serious-minded reformer of civic life ever be able to inspire men with ideas of Political virtue if the very terms he must use in discourse are in advance emptied of all significance save of what is mean and vile?

63. Circumambient. Whoever first wrote this word must have fancied that he knew Latin better than the Latins. They were content with simple Ambio, without Circum. And the old Latins were in the right, for the idea of Circum (round about) is already in the word, and to add to it is as unnecessary as to prefix Circum to Circulate. "Ambio" is a compound word formed of Ambi (around, round about) and Eo (to go), and hence Ambiens (ambient) means Surrounding, Circling or Circulating about, and Circumambient cannot possibly mean any more.

64. Nonplus indicates the mental state of a man so worsted in argument that "plus non habet" (he has nothing more) to say, no further reasons to produce; he is at the end of his argumental resources. Such a man is not one bam-

boozled or puzzled. Dictionarians include in their definitions of Nonplus the notion of perplexity, puzzlement, bewilderment, but cannot cite from literature authorities for such use of the term. When South writes, "The Nonplus of my reason will yield a fairer opportunity to my faith," he means that when his reason comes to the end of its resources his faith will have fairer opportunity. In the sentence following the verb Nonplus is used improperly: "The railroad companies are doing their best to Nonplus the public with the belief," etc.

65. Empiric. Had this word come into our English after Bacon's day it would now be a word high in honor instead of a term of reproach. It is from Greek, and means Experimentalist, or experimental philosopher, an inductive reasoner, one who tests conclusions by observation and experiment. It need not be said that modern philosophers and modern naturalists and men of science are proud to be Empirics in this sense, the only legitimate sense of the word. Empiric seems to have been originally employed in a good sense to designate a school of medicine which had its rise two or three hundred years before our era. This sect or school rejected the traditionalist and speculative teachings of the dogmatic schools, and

professed to derive their knowledge of diseases and remedies from observation and experiment. In modern times practicers of medicine who enter the calling of physician without what is called a regular medical education, trusting wholly to what they have gathered by their own effort and their own experience, are called Empirics; hence Empiric means in the terminology of regular practicers Quack, Charlatan.

SECTION III. MISCELLANEOUS PHRASES.

66. ONE exhibits great poverty of expression whose sole formula of assent or approval is All Right. It is a much overworked phrase. Real Good is a vulgarization of a phrase which, correctly expressed and employed where occasion calls for it, is both temperate and emphatic: really good, opposed to make-beliefly good. Every Time is not an improvement on Always. When two acts are of equal facility or equal difficulty in the doing it suffices usually to say that one is "as easy" or "as difficult" as the other. But not content with thus accurately and temperately expressing the equality, common usage asserts of them exact equality: one is "just" as easy as the other. A similar exaggeration or mild hysteric-ism is seen in the phrase, "I was Deathly sick," meaning "I was suffering from nausea." A cold is always a Bad Cold. Whatever is enjoyable is Perfectly lovely. "Nice" is one of our over-worked words: it covers a multitude of senses.

Perhaps it is not superfluous caution to brand as slang the phrase "He made himself Solid with the party leaders." The figure called by rhetoricians Aposiopesis is highly effective when used discreetly: it is employed quite too frequently in ordinary conversation, as in the expressions I was So pleased, We had Such a good time.

67. In the following sentence the intention of the speaker must decide whether Or or Nor shall be used between "papers" and "documents." The author from whom the passage is taken uses Or, though almost certainly his intention demanded Nor: "We have no papers or documents in regard to this line." If Papers there denotes anything different from Documents Nor must be used: if the two terms are identical in sense, and the one merely amplificative of the other Or is the proper conjunction to use.

68. The final preposition in the phrase "Curiosity as to where the gold goes to" is superfluous and inelegant. We do not ask "To where does the gold go?" In "I must have a place equally as good," the "as" is not needed; "equally good" expresses the idea fully. "Going to go," "going to come," are plainly inelegant; but the use of "I am going to" do this or that as an habitual mode of expressing purpose to perform an action is almost as objectionable. Say "I in-

tend", or "purpose", or "mean", or "design", etc., or "I am to", or "I will" or "shall"; not banning the phrase "I am going to" utterly, but not overworking it.

69. Some speakers never Decide or Conclude or Determine to do anything: they "make up their mind." Others after "making up their mind" to act, as a preliminary to action go about some imaginary sort of work, to get their hand in: then they are ready for action. Here is a section of a conversation overheard in a railway car: "I told him I wasn't Going to Work to pay him the bill, but if he'd Go to Work and give me credit for my extra hours, why, then I'd Go to Work and settle the whole thing right away."

70. Such a form of expression as "I don't wish to" is intolerable even in familiar talk; in writing it is an abomination. Yet the president of one of our foremost seats of learning is author of this sentence: "The commission is at liberty to, and it proposes to, enlarge the facilities," etc. If the commission had been disinclined to "enlarge the facilities," the reason doubtless would have been given in elegant form by saying "it does not feel like enlarging," etc. It does not make one "feel good" to notice such slovenliness in a document penned by the head of a great and aspiring university.

71. The phrase *That Depends* is perfectly just, and it is no incomplete phrase comparable to an aposiopesis. '*That Depends*' means that the validity of a conclusion, for example, is contingent, literally it hangs suspended or undecided. "*The man was hanged*" tells the whole story; needless to add "*from a gallows*."

72. The phrase *Only Too Willing* is supplanting the simple word *Willing*. A disposition of mind that would find adequate expression in "*I should like well*," or "*It would please me*," or the like is now usually expressed by the "*precious*" formula above.

73. A judge in rendering decision of a very famous suit spoke of the three respondents or defendants (they were executors of a last will) as *Trustees ex Maleficio*. Then, lest the three executors should regard the phrase, without quite understanding the Latin words, as imputing to them dishonest dealing, he wrote: "*I do not mean to be understood as saying that either one of said defendants committed any actual fraud. . . . There is nothing in the evidence showing that all Mr. R——'s acts*"—he was one of three—"were not free from fraud." Doubtless the judge's intention was to acquit the trustees of even the shadow of a suspicion of dishonesty. But professional vanity dictated the Latin technical phrase,

and it had to be put in the first place: its ugliness could then be smoothed away. And see how the smoothing is done. The defendants had not committed "any 'actual' fraud." Why, the men had not committed any fraud at all—in the sense of fraud as understood by laymen; and as the incidental explanation of the phrase *Trustees ex Maleficio* was addressed to laymen, the language ought to have been such as laymen use. What the judge meant was "had not committed any fraud whatever," or any dishonesty. Not content with this he attempted to relieve Mr. R—— in particular of any faintest suspicion of fraud, and added the cumbersome, intricate sentence "There is nothing," etc., the import of which cannot be got at without analysis. He meant to say "The evidence shows all Mr. R——'s acts to be free from fraud." But the involvement of clauses in the sentence produces in the mind of the hearer or reader a puzzling effect comparable to that produced by the old jingle, "Tobacco hic, tobacco hic, will make you well if you are sick; Tobacco hic, tobacco hic, if you are well will make you sick."

74. Getting Religion. This old cant will probably before long be changed to the form "securing religion." It has made one step toward the suggested new form, a man in Jersey City having declared that he had "received" religion.

75. If the weather in Germany in the winter of 1894-95 was, as the newspapers reported, "terrifically severe," it was quite unnecessary to add "unusually" (terrifically and unusually severe). Under Terrifically severe winters, if they were usual, there would be no Germany.

76. In a testimonial address to a man who had deserved well of his fellow citizens was this sentence, "Your praise shall find room in the eyes of all posterity"; an absurd expression, for the organ that takes cognizance of praise, as of fame, is the ear, not the eye. Then, "find room in the eye"! That organ, so sensitive that the minutest mote that finds lodgment in it causes distress. In short, the metaphor, or whatever the figure of speech may be called, is quite incongruous. Nevertheless the passage is from Shakespeare's Sonnet 55.

77. Beastly Drunk is a phrase which has no justification in fact. Beasts are not addicted to the vice of drunkenness, and in the state of nature are not given to any vices, whether laziness or filthy habits (the wild boar is said to be of all animals most scrupulously neat in his habits); and their diseases and vices in the domesticated state are the result of their unnatural environment.

78. There is an implied calumny against the feathered tribe in the phrase, "He feathered his

nest," meaning that one robbed his neighbor to enrich himself and his family. Some birds feather their nests with the down and plumage of their own breasts, others with the cast plumage of their fellows. None feather their nests at the expense of their kind. The bird's feathering of her nest is altogether kindly and lovely, and admirable and holy. The phrase that expresses in our language her loving providence for her bairns should never be employed to designate the meannesses and treasons of man. We impennate bipeds are literally and figuratively the only creatures that rob one another and our fellow creatures of their means of comfort and adornment. Again, no bird out of fable ever strutted in alien plumage. But who has not seen the great generals and the great captains of industry whose fame and fortune have been won for them by their humble and unknown and unguerdoned instruments?

79. Every Other Day. Some grammarians troubled with scruples think this phrase incorrect, and that the meaning of it is All other days. The proper phrase, say they, for expressing the notion intended to be signified by the inculcated formula is "every second day," or "alternate days." But those Latinish words are etymologically counterparts of "every other." Alter (Lat.) means "the other." From Alter comes Alternus, one

after another. Second is of the same meaning as "the other." It is usual in Latin to number a series thus: *tomus prior* (vol. I.), *tomus altera* (the other vol., vol. 2), *tomus tertia*, *quarta* (third fourth), etc. And "Second day" in a succession of days is *alter dies* (the other day.) If in Latin one wished to express in the singular number the notion "every other day," or "every second day," or each alternate day, he would have to use a phrase identical in all its parts with the English one to which objection is made, viz., *altero quoque die*; but the plural form is both shorter and better, *alternis diebus*, on alternate days, that is, "on the other days," the second days.

80. In the phrase "At a Dear cost" *Dear* is used illegitimately. That which is got at a high price may be said to be *Dear*, being costly. But the price is not "dear," nor the cost. Prices are high, cost is high. Price is the assumed equivalent in money or other exchangeable thing of what is sold: for both buyer and seller the equivalent is the Price. But cost is the price the buyer pays: it is price from the buyer's side, but not from the seller's as seller. Again, though one may have made many purchases, when he pays he pays the Cost of them, not the Costs. The plural form is used only of the charges incurred by a party to a suit at law. Unless the several items of a gross

sum expended are to be specified it is more correct to say: "The expenditure was so much" than "the expenditures."

81. *Exceptio probat regulam* is usually translated The exception proves the rule (perhaps it were better translated An exception proves a rule); and the dictum is glibly repeated, whether in Latin or English, too often, it is to be feared, without understanding of its import. How does an exception prove a rule? There is a rule of Latin prosody which makes the penultima (the syllable next before the last) in such words as *faciei*, *speciei*, long, and to that rule there are three exceptions, the three words *fidei*, *spei*, and *rei* having the penultima short. With these three words in hand, and known to be short or "common" in the penultima, could any one "prove" from them that the penultima in all other words of like form is long? Certainly not. But if *fidei*, *spei*, *rei* are given to him as "exceptional" in the quantity of the penultima, the inevitable inference for him is that words of that class have the penultima long. It is thus, and thus only, that an exception proves a rule.

SECTION IV. SYNTAX AND FOREIGN- ISMS.

A. SOME POINTS OF SYNTAX AND THE LAWS OF EXPRESSION.

82. IF it is not a law of English syntax that where "has been" or "has done" is predicated of a subject (man, beast, or inanimate thing) that subject is supposed to be living or existing really or figuratively or constructively when the proposition is announced, then such a law would be a good one to recognize and formulate, for it appears to have the characters of a natural law of the language. Whether the law is recognized or not, the use of the "perfect tense" only under such conditions would be of advantage. The Latin language with all its tenses is incapable of indicating by simple choice of the tense the continued existence or life of the subject. *Historias scripsit Livius; Multa Sinensium munimenta ceperunt Japones* (Livy wrote histories; the Japanese took many fortifications of the Chinese): the writer of Latin has but one tense-form (the perfect) to express both notions: so that whether the

taking of the fortifications is a matter of ancient history or a thing announced this moment for the first time, having taken place yesterday, the Latin can only say *ceperunt* for both cases, while we can say "took" for the historical captures, and "have taken" when we speak of yesterday's doings. When we find in an author, "George Sand has always been a careful worker" we know that when the sentence was penned the writer knew, or believed, that George Sand was living.

83. If our reading of the "natural law" of the perfect tense is true, then this sentence violates law: "This picture has been painted by Tintoret," unless it be supposed written by a contemporary of Tintoret. But what of such a phrase as, "Cicero has been accused of inordinate vainglory"? The "has been" there is justified, for Cicero still lives in fame, and to this day men are judging him. Some one, remarking on the murder of a young actress by her lover, writes: "All who knew her agree that her professional life was exemplary, but what a wretched ending it has had!" The sentence was written within a few days after the young woman's death. By a figure of speech the life is imagined to have just ended: it is as though one were standing beside the bier. Suppose weeks or months to have intervened and "has had" would be a bold figure of speech indeed.

84. In the collocation of words in a sentence very little is left to the choice of the speaker or writer of English. For example, the qualifying article *Only* has its place very strictly assigned by the laws of expression, and this place is easily found on analyzing the sentence in which the word occurs. A distinguished author begins a sentence thus: "The drama, upon which the curtain had only fallen a short time since." Here *Only* is out of its due place; it should stand immediately before "a short time." Placed before "fallen" it modifies or qualifies that word, contrary to the writer's intention. The misplacing of *Only* is extremely common. The same author has "They dishonorably treated him in return," the qualifying adverb again misplaced. In passing, notice is to be taken of the incorrect use of *Since* instead of *Before*. Though *Since* is often employed in the sense of *Ago* (before now), as

Twelve years since

Thy father was the Duke of Milan;

it nowhere has the meaning of "before then," "before that time."

85. Such ungrammatical phrases as the following are seen so often in print that a certain measure of "authority" might seem to exist for their justification: "Some of the attendants 'whom' he said were incompetent." "Who" is required in

that sentence by a law that no "authority" is likely to abrogate for some time yet.

86. Sometimes, through fear of falling into a syntactic error, one will use an adverb where the laws of grammar call for an adjective, e. g., as when one says he feels contemptuously toward another, meaning contemptuous. In such phrases the adjective attaches to the person who feels, not to the manner of his feeling: it is as if he had said "I feel myself contemptuous toward." So one feels angry, not angrily, happy not happily, miserable not miserably. Similarly the correct expression is "It looks bad or gloomy for John," not badly nor gloomily. Dear is already an adverb, and that form is often preferable to dearly: "He paid dear for his whistle": "It cost me dear." If any one chooses to use cheap (adv.) always, not cheaply, he will have full approval of the genius of the language.

87. We was, You was, They was, i. e., the use of Was as plural of the past tense of the verb to be, once had the sanction of the best usage; but now the plural of that tense is Were, and Was is a vulgarism when coupled with a plural subject. Had Ought, as in the phrase "He had ought to be here" is also a vulgarism as bad as Had Went. "He done it" is often used erroneously instead of "He did it." It is a provincialism to use "as" in-

stead of "that" or "whether" in such phrases as "I don't know as I do."

88. The preposition *To*, which we use as part of what we call the infinitive form of verbs, is the preposition "to," but the etymological signification is no longer perceived, and "to" is a particle comparable to the terminations "ing" and "ation," and an inseparable part of the infinitive form of verbs. No author who uses English with propriety ever separates "to" from the verbal word by interposition even of a monosyllable, e. g., "to so direct": the correct style is "so to direct," or "to direct so." Interposition of a word of several syllables is a more serious violation of the law of usage: "To decisively pronounce." But quite intolerable is the phrase used by a very distinguished jurist, "A purpose to in some way use the grand jury." One might almost as well say, "Contro stoutly vertering," or "Per insensibly vading," instead of "stoutly controverting," "insensibly pervading;" or "y John clept" for yclept John, the y in that antiquated participle standing for a more ancient ge: geklept. That ge (or y) marked completed action, as "to" helps to express action in the abstract.

89. No little discrimination is required to decide which form, the adjectival or the adverbial, should be used in such phrases as High-strung,

Dealing fair, Feeding fair and fat, Lying soft, Seeing clear, Hitting foul; of all of these perhaps the last is the only one whose adverb may rightly take the termination "ly."

90. Despite its plural-like form, three and a half feet of water is a singular concept, and should be construed as of the singular number: "There is ten feet of water"; "Three thousand five hundred dollars is in the chest"; "Between twenty-five hundred and three thousand dollars is due." But "Between twenty and thirty members were present." For the same reason that a given number of dollars is treated as a singular concept, "an ironworks", "a barracks", "a scissors" must be regarded as legitimate phrases. And when we speak of the United States as a whole without specific regard to its parts, the term should be construed as of the singular number: nor need grammarians have waited for "the dread arbitrament of war" to decide that point of syntax: a number of independent States standing together in a mere Zollverein or customs union might legitimately be treated as of the singular number.

91. Conversely, "Every One" in comprehension is plural, and that fact fully justifies such usage as "Every one brought their provisions." The same is to be said of No One: "No one thought of themselves." In having but one form to ex-

press the possessive case of he, she, it, some other languages, as Latin, French, have an advantage over English. Whether the subject of a sentence is man or woman, the knife of either is "son", "son couteau", the possessive pronoun standing both for "his" and "her." Often we say "his" when we mean "his-or-her", and for such cases it has been seriously proposed to coin a compound possessive pronoun, "hiser" or "hisher" (pron. hizzer.) But another way out of the difficulty is found in substituting "their" for "his-or-her." John Ruskin, greatest living master of English, but not in the least finical, uses the plural "their" after "any one", "every one", "no one", and the like.

92. When addition of the inflectional *s* of the possessive case produces an unpleasant succession of hissing, or hizzing, sounds, the rule that already holds for the possessive plural ought to apply: when the plural form of a noun ends with *s* soft (equal to *z*) no *s* is added for the possessive case. Euphony decides that question. Let euphony also decide the form of the possessive case of Demosthenes, Moses, Jesus, Xerxes, and the rest.

93. Near (prep. and adv.) is to be preferred to "nearly", except where "nearly" is required to express the intended meaning. "John is near

fifty years old" is better than "nearly fifty years old." "About his eightieth year" is better than "about in." Write "near undone", instead of "nearly." But in "had nearly occasioned the ruin of his friend", "nearly" is indispensable.

94. In the phrases following the words between curves may with advantage be dropped: To infringe (on) the royal authority; to approve (of) a policy; to do away (with) an abuse: these phrases are types of many others which might be mended by a like surgery.

95. "A year ago" means, not twelve months just elapsed, but a point of time immediately prior to those twelve months. Hence the phrase "Within a year ago" is incorrect: to convey the notion intended one must say "within a year," or, to be perfectly definite, "within the year just past."

96. Such phrases as "Going on ten years", "he had no end of trouble", "it cost me no end of anxiety", are perfectly legitimate and idiomatic, and are not to be put out of use by the rulings of grammarians.

97. "Enough" in the phrase Curiously Enough is but a tribute to use and wont. Drop it, and "curiously" by itself expresses the idea quite as definitely.

98. "By all means" signifies just what it says — "with employment of every means or instru-

mentality"; "I will get there by all means"; "He can by no means earn ten thousand a year": in such sentences we see the phrase employed in its true sense. But in the following examples it is used quite out of its meaning: First, but by no means most deserving; Are you a freetrader? By no means. It is not denied that even the best writers employ the phrase sometimes amiss. But a nice grammatical conscience will not tolerate departure from the true meaning.

99. Frequent use of such phrases as "in the event that" when a single "if" would suffice, is mere pedantism and affectation. Such, too, is the "precious" phrase "if by any chance."

100. Grammar, Grammatical, Ungrammatical, are often employed in a sense which implies that syntax is the whole of grammar. If one says "I is", or "He hates you and I", or "We was", he is said to violate the rules of grammar: the same is not said of misspelling, though misspelling is also a violation of the laws of grammar, viz., of orthography, one of the departments of grammar. But whoever uses words in senses not justified, either by etymology or usage, also violates the laws of grammar: but if he only avoids breaking the syntactic laws his offense is not regarded as against grammar. Grammar, the grammar of a language, is the sum of the laws

which govern its processes: it is both the anatomy and the physiology of the language.

101. In the Constitution of the United States and its Amendments, except the last three, the legislative department is always styled "the Congress." President Cleveland in his Messages invariably retains the style of the Constitution in this respect, and for him Congress is always "the Congress."

102. In Britain the head of the state is always "the King" (or "the Queen"), and by that phrase no other monarch is understood throughout the British dominions, as by "Parliament" when employed out of direct relation to the affairs of any outside country, the British Parliament is designated. But in the United States, in the public press and in conversation "Parliament" and "the Queen" are very usual designations for the Legislature and monarch of Great Britain, as though those institutions of our kin over sea appertained to them alone, or in a pre-eminent degree. Ignorance and thoughtlessness are answerable for such use of the terms in the United States. In this country the phrase "the President", unaccompanied by mention of functions or relations that might serve to define its meaning, is understood of the President of the United States: "the Treasury" is the United States Treasury; and so on.

A journal published in England would no more express the notion "President of the United States" by "the President" in a detached paragraph, than in mentioning in similar circumstances the Emperor of Russia it would style him simply "His Majesty." And that is correct usage. In this country even the phrase "the Royal Navy" is used often as equivalent to "the British navy." Catnip tea, brewed by Grimalkin & Co., purveyors to Her Majesty, the Queen, their Royal Highnesses, and their Imperial Transparencies, passes for superexcellent in virtue of the survival here of ancestral insularity and provincialism.

103. A Message of a President of the United States to Congress on the necessity of providing a reserve of gold in the Treasury contains the following sentence: "In the judgment of those especially charged with this responsibility, the business situation is so critical, and the legislative situation so unpromising, with the omission thus far on the part of the Congress to beneficially enlarge the powers of the Secretary of the Treasury in the premises, as to enjoin immediately executive action with the facilities at hand." To say nothing of such pidgin English phrases as "legislative situation", "beneficially enlarge", "in the premises", "facilities at hand" (meaning powers or authority given by law), or the use

of the ambiguous word "enjoin", which means to order to be done or to forbid doing; or of the relation which "with" ("with the omission", etc.) establishes between what precedes it and what follows, the sentence (if it may be called a sentence) is nonsense, has no meaning, affirms or denies nothing. The Message was uncommonly brief, and the passage quoted was no small fractional part of it; it was besides, or was intended to be, a very important part of the Message. Hence this part being so deadly defective and null, we should not say with Senator John Sherman that such a Message is "a clear and well-written document"; nor with Mr. Stearns, a man prominent among bankers in New York, that in this Message "the President puts the question in a nutshell." In the same Message the President writes of the terms of a contract between the Treasury and certain bankers, that by it "the privilege is especially reserved to the Government" to make slightly different terms for obtaining the needed gold. That is an abuse of the word Privilege. It is not a privilege, but a right, that both parties to a proposed contract shall be free to define the conditions on which they will contract. Another phrase in the same brief Message is "other bonds in terms payable in gold." What the President

meant to say was simply "other bonds payable in gold."

104. Many persons have what might aptly be called a false grammatical conscience with regard to the propriety of the expression *Spoonfuls*, thinking that they must say *spoonsful*. A moment's thought would banish their scruple. For when the Doctor prescribes for Baby medicine to be administered by the spoonful, he surely does not mean that if three such quantities are to be given as one dose three spoons must be employed: and if there are not three spoons how, O slave of the letter, how can there be three spoons full, or empty either? The expressions *Spoonful*, *Spoonfuls*, *bucketful*, *bucketfuls*, *hatful*, *houseful*, are quite above reproach, whether in the singular or the plural number, and to have any scruple about them is to borrow trouble.

105. A similar overscrupulosity—if that word be allowable or necessary, for *Scruple* says enough—is seen when people boggle at such a phrase as "Any one else's business." They think the right phrasing is "any one's else." The argument by which they defend the precious formula would make it consequent for them to say "His father's in law property", "the commander's in chief orders", "the Attorney's General office." Doubtless their "first line of defense" would be a

distinction between the forms of the two classes of phrases; but there is positively no difference of form except that one is hyphenated, the other not. With or without hyphens, commander in chief is one term, one noun, and, like other nouns, takes its inflection (for the possessive case singular) at the end, though for the plural in commander in chief, Attorney General, etc., the inflection attaches to the first element in the words. "Any one else" is inflected in the singular number in the same way: its plural form "any persons else" also conforms to the formula of attorneys general, commanders in chief. The first line of defense broken there is no second; the scrupulous ones have no support from usage.

106. Disembodied is a type of a numerous class of words in the formation of which the plain laws of wordbuilding would seem to have been disregarded. Embody is a word rationally constructed; it means literally to invest with a body, to set into a body. In composition Dis is the opposite of En or Em. Then why should not the opposite of Embody be Disbody? The word Disbody is already in the language, but in dictionaries it has set against it a sign to indicate obsolescence. But the warning ought to be disregarded, and the word allowed free currency to the driving out of Disembody. To get the form

Disembody we must first invest with a body, and then do away with that vesture. What an absurdity. Disembody, we have said, is a type of a large class of irrationally formed words. Here are a few of them: Disembark, Disembarrass, Disembay, Disembellish (one is tolerant of the mark for "obsolete" set against such a word as that), Disembogue, Disembowel, Disembower, Disenchain, Disenchant, Disencourage, Disendow, Disenfranchise, Disengage.

107. There are a few pairs of words the members of which are often erroneously used for each other, e. g., lie and lay, sit and set, learn and teach (but the existence of the word Learned is proof that at one time "to learn" was used in the sense of "to teach.") The difference between Lie and Lay, Sit and Set, is that in each pair the first member is "intransitive", as grammarians say—that is, it expresses an action that does not pass over to an object, while the second member is "transitive", passing over to an object. A person "sits" in a chair, but "sets" a lamp on a table; "lies" on a bed, but "lays" baby on a bed or "lays" himself down. "To learn" means to acquire knowledge; "to teach" means to impart knowledge. The distinction between Lie and Lay, Sit and Set, has always been recognized in the language. Not so the distinction between

Learn and Teach. Shakespeare and other great writers often use Learn in the sense of Teach, e. g., "Your fly will learn you all games." B. Jonson.

108. The phrase "He was given leave of absence" may probably be said to have acquired right of citizenship in the language. We have evidence that similar expressions were at an early period in use among the Latins, as we see in such verbs as Donor, from Do, to give: Rude donatus est, he was given a rod. Our phrase "Possessed of riches" is analogous. So is the phrase "I am told." But though a few phrases like "He was given a situation" may have won admission into the category of allowable locutions, it does not follow that that formula is valid for all occasions. Hence we rightfully challenge such phrases as "Manufacturers were conceded special rates." "He was given to understand" may, perhaps, pass muster.

109. The only rational use of punctuation marks is to make sentences perspicuous and unambiguous. There is no fashion in punctuation that a writer is under obligation to respect. In drafting rules experience has proved that perspicuity is better attained by parsimony than by liberality of punctuation. In the following sentences taken from newspapers, the comma, in-

stead of making the sense perspicuous really perverts it: "A big, popular loan"; without the comma the phrase would say a popular loan that is big; with the comma it means a big loan that is in favor with the people—a considerable difference. "He wore his old, benevolent look" has the same defect. Macaulay is a model of consistent use of punctuation marks and parsimony in the employment of them.

110. Anybody, however heedless in style, can see the inelegance of "Here where there is plenty", "there are there plenty of opportunities." Only one step removed from this in regard of uncouthness is the phrase "Here there are", or "There are here."

B. FOREIGN WORDS IN ENGLISH.

III. ENGLISH being a highly composite language with a vocabulary made up of elements from many diverse tongues, is hospitable to every stranger word that presents even only plausible credentials; though the dictionaries are bursting with the overabundance of words, there is ever room for one more. Had English in the past suffered the newcomers, as it too often suffers them to-day, to retain the inflexion forms of their original languages, the Anglic tongue would be incomparably more anomalous even than it is. There is in use among us a considerable number of words from foreign sources which not only are permitted to wear their garb of outlandish accidence, but which are by customary law obliged to retain their foreign characters. The French language adopts a word from German or from English, and the next day it is unrecognizable when spoken in the hearing of those who speak its original language. But nowadays a word newly adopted into English out of Latin retains

in English its Latin accidence to a great extent; and the same is true of words derived from German, French, Italian, etc. Because the Lat. *Bacillus* has *Bacilli* plur., every writer and speaker of English, on pain of being writ down an ignorant person, must say One *bacillus*, two *bacilli*; so, too, we must say One *bacterium*, a mass of *bacteria*. In German and in French the terminations of such words are lopped off, and what remains is treated as though it were German or French originally. But because we do not order matters in that commonsense way in English, such of us as are not conversant in all the languages under the sun have painfully to learn the laws of grammatical accidence that obtain in the several languages from which the outlandish words are derived. A few of these laws here follow.

112. (1) In words derived from Latin which have the termination *Um*, the plural form ends in *a*: *Animalculum*, *animalcula* (very few writers indeed make the plural of this word as it ought to be—with termination *a*: almost universally the plural form is made *Animalculae*, and the true plural is taken to be singular—an *animalcula*). The plural of *Candelabrum* (accent on third syllable) is *Candelabra* (it is a vulgarism to say *Candelabras*, plur., for *Candelabra* is already plural);

of Aquarium *Aquaria*, Bacterium *bacteria*, Datum *data* (it is a solecism to treat *data* as singular), Stratum *strata*: and so on with all words of Latin or Greek origin ending in *Um* or *On* (neuter). But if your Gr. word in *On* is not neuter, you will have to add a syllable or two to form the plural, e. g., Leon (lion) plur. *leontes*.

113. (2) As a general rule words Latin or Greek ending in *us* (or Gr. *os*) become plur. by changing the termination to *i*, e. g. Radius *radii*, Bacillus *bacilli*. But not all Lat. and Gr. words in *us* (*os*) form their plurals in that way, e. g. Genus, plur. *genera*, Viscus *viscera*, Rhinoceros *rhinocerotes*.

114. (3) A noun singular ending in *a* (Gr. or Lat.) usually has the plur. in *ae*: Formula *formulae*. But there is in each language a large class of words in *a* which make the plural in *ata*: Poema (poem) *poemata*, Miasma *miasmata*, Plasma *plasmata*, Stigma *stigmata*.

115. (4) There are Latin words in “*us*” which we treat in English as nouns singular, yet which in Lat. are neither nouns nor singular nor in the nominative case. Examples: Ignoramus, Mandamus, Omnibus. Ignoramus and Mandamus are verbs, and the two words mean “We do not know”, and “We give order” respectively. Omnibus is an adjective, and is in the plural but in

one of the Latin "objective" cases. Many a writer presumed to be familiar with the Latin language has betrayed his entire ignorance of it by treating Ignoramus as in Latin a noun equivalent to Duncce, and giving it a nominative case plural, Ignorami: this was done in the editorial page of the Cincinnati "Commercial" a good many years ago, and the blunder has been repeated often since.

116. (5) Nouns ending in "is" and "es" usually have the plur. in "es"; but some of them add a syllable or more, e. g., Limes (limit) plu. limites.

117. The foregoing rules and remarks are not designed for lessons in Latin and Greek—only as helps toward the proper use of the Greek and Latin unnaturalized elements that exist in English. These are lessons not in Latin and Greek, but, strange to say, in English! They are not designed to enable the non-Latinist to handle Latin words with confidence: they are only exemplifications of a few of the rules of Latin accidence to enable the reader to recognize the signs of the singular and plural number. In writing or speaking a person who is not entirely sure that his Lat. or Gr. word in "us" is a noun singular forming its plural in "i" will do best by pluralizing in the English manner, adding "es,"

as *Circus*, *circuses*; and so with all other nouns or words used for nouns. Unless one knows well all the rules, with the exceptions, one is sure to make mistakes. For example, observing the rule that "us" sing. becomes "i" plur., except certain words, e. g. *genus*, *viscus* (which take the termination "era" plur.), a person ignorant of the other rules would write the plur. of *Apparatus* *apparati*, *Exercitus* (army) *exerciti*; but those plurals would be incorrect, for these two words and a host of others have the plural nominative in the same form as the singular. Or again, coming upon the word *Viscus* (birdlime), would perhaps class it with *Genus* and that other *Viscus* and make the plur. *Viscera*. That would be an error, for *Viscus*, meaning birdlime, has plur. (if plur. it has at all) *visci*.

118. The word *Bravo* has been fully naturalized in English, and one would be justly regarded finical who should censure the use of the word in that form in expressing admiration for the performance of, say, a female violinist; but in such a case an Italian or a Spaniard would say *Brava*, and in their mouth *Bravo* would be a solecism indeed. But it is different with *Virtuoso* (plur. *virtuosi*), which has a feminine form, *Virtuosa* (plur. *virtuose*). *Incognito* (unknown, not known for what one is) is perhaps like *Bravo*

sufficiently Englished to disregard its Italian inflection (*incogniti, incognita, incognite*). Dilettante has but one form for both genders: plur. *Dilettanti*. French nouns commonly add *s* to the sing. termination to form the plural. In Russian, in Chinese (Mandarin dialect), in Maori, in Hottentot and the thousand and one other languages, dialects, patois, jargons, etc., which contribute of their vocabularies to English there are, of course, very hard and fast rules of grammatical accidence which every "educated" Anglic person is presumed to know, but there is no room for them here.

119. Phrases from foreign languages should never be ventured by any one who does not know either directly or "*aliunde*" just what they mean. That word *Aliunde* means "from other things" or from other sides or sources, as a lawyer would of necessity know the precise import of "*aliunde*" from seeing it used in decisions of courts, arguments of counsel, and treatises on testimony, even though he had not made a study of Latin. So nearly every intelligent speaker of English understands, *aliunde*, the precise import of such a phrase as *Habeas Corpus*. But for one who has not had direct acquaintance with the Latin language, it is exceedingly risky to bandy Latin phrases.

120. If a word or phrase in a foreign language expresses an idea more neatly than the same idea can be expressed in the vernacular save in a roundabout way, as exemplified in the sentence above explaining the meaning of *Aliunde*, then, provided the person addressed also knows what the foreign expression means, the same is to be preferred to a vernacular word or phrase. And on no other ground can the use, in speaking or in writing, of phrases from foreign languages be justified. Suppose the definition of Justice given in the Justinian *Institutiones* of the Civil law commends itself to you as far neater than Noah Webster's, that would not excuse your quoting the Latin of the *Institutiones* for the "enlightenment" of a hearer who is wholly ignorant of Latin. It is the height of absurdity to quote passages in foreign languages to people who know only the vernacular, and then, in condescension to their ignorance, to give the passages in English. To indulge in such quotations in conversing with or addressing the less learned is to flaunt your assumed superiority over them quite as offensively and as vulgarly as Croesus flaunts his when he dazzles the town with his gorgeous equipages.

121. But there are so many words and phrases from foreign languages current in conversation and in the newspapers, that, understanding them

rightly or not, one can hardly avoid using them. There is the phrase "In petto." Everybody uses it, but very few, indeed, use it in its proper sense. "In petto" is a quasi-technical term of the pontifical court of Rome, and means literally "in the breast," in secret, not divulged. "Coup de soleil" a few years ago was commonly used by English-speaking persons instead of sunstroke (we are now becoming so scientific that we say instead *Thermic Fever*). Who has not seen such a use of the French word *Nee* (acute accent over the first e) as this: "The Marquis of Lorne, nee Campbell"—nee being supposed to mean "family name," whereas it really means *Born*, and being in the feminine gender cannot be used of a male person.

122. When the Irish party in the British House of Commons, fulfilling the prophecy of Grattan, had by their obstructive tactics and strategy made impossible the transaction of business under the ancient rules of that body, and the rule of the *Previous Question* had to be introduced, the method of limiting and closing debate got the French name of *Cloture* (circumflex accent over o, u pronounced as in French, accent mainly on the last syllable), to indicate how foreign to English parliamentary proceeding any limitation of freedom of debate was. But common sense got

the better of John Bull's ridiculous squeamishness, and now he frankly, though no longer frenchily (he calls the operation now Closure, without any French frills), muzzles the minority when to him seems good.

123. The phrase *In partibus infidelium*, like that other, *In petto*, is generally misapplied and misunderstood. The general understanding of the phrase "bishop in *partibus infidelium*" is that it denotes a bishop whose actual field of labor is in a heathen or "infidel" country. But in fact the bishop in *partibus infidelium* may have his residence in Rome or Madrid: it may almost be said that he never is supposed to reside at his nominal see, or even to have visited it. It is purely a matter of title. The man is a sort of bishop by brevet, the brevet giving him episcopal precedence and the right to show episcopal insignia, and on occasion to "pontificate" like a regular working bishop. But he has no diocese, no jurisdiction on the strength of the title; his bishopric is a castle in Spain. If such bishops exercise jurisdiction and perform episcopal functions in definite territories, those territories are never, or hardly ever, the territories designated by their episcopal style, as "Bishop of Curium," "Bishop of Carthage," etc. In short, the bishoprics in *partibus infidelium* are fictions of ecclesiastical law.

124. Tourist visitors to the chief city of France or, their return home will be heard to pronounce its name *Paree*, and the names of other French places also with an attempt at imitation of the French manner. It is not easy here to draw the line and to decide what is ridiculous affectation and what honest desire of correctness. But certainly no line can rightly be drawn which shall include Paris among the names of places to be pronounced (in speaking English) in the French way. The same is to be said of Brussels, Lyons, Marseilles. Even in the case of such a name as *La Rochelle* there is a French way of pronouncing that, and there is a non-French way: and the man who in speaking English should give the name in the French way would be reasonably suspected of affectation. The safe rule would seem to be to pronounce the words about half-right. Here emphatically *virtus in medio*: absolute correctness is a positive vice.

125. It is a little singular that while people who perhaps cannot read understandingly a line of French, will take great pains to pronounce "*au revoir*," "*embonpoint*," etc., as frenchily as possible, they are incapable of noticing how their mispronunciation of pretty familiar words of a more nearly domestic origin (so to speak) murders some very expressive phrases. How few of

PITFALLS IN ENGLISH.

those who use the word "blarney" have recognized the ineffable "comether," the wheedling charm of that word as it is pronounced by the native Corkonian or the Munsterman to the manner born. The longdrawn "a" is no "Italian a" nor "English a in Father": it is the very flattest of a's, and therein is the secret of its spell. Verily it is a word to conjure with.

126. How ought the names of Germans, Frenchmen, Russians, Laplanders, Otaheitans, and so forth, to be pronounced by English-speaking persons? It is no affectation of superior knowledge if one studies to pronounce "half aright" such names as Rothschild (roteshilt), Sadi Carnot (sah-dee car-no) Faure (fore). But how should we pronounce the name, say, of Field Marshal Von Bluecher? Blootsher, or ("half-right") Bleeker? One inclines to side with the "blootshers"; they have on their side tradition, almost universal Anglic usage, and Magna Tsharta! It is too late to try to get the doughty Field Marshal's name even half-right. To the Britons who were his companions in arms at Waterloo he was Blootsher, and what he was to them on that day is the only point touching him that was of interest then or subsequently. His counterpart-that-ought-to-have-been, Grouchy, is for English-speaking folk Growtshy. But in the case of our

contemporaries the effort should be made to pronounce all "foreign" names half-way right.

127. The reader may have noticed in the foregoing paragraph two different solutions of the problem, How to express the notion of "a personal or family name originating in a language foreign to us." In the first sentence it is solved by use of periphrasis—"names of Germans, Frenchmen," and so forth. In the last sentence it is solved by calling such names "foreign" between inverted commas. Neither solution is satisfactory; the first is awkward, the second is inadequate, for we have no inverted commas in the spoken language. Wanted, a word, one word, which shall designate such a class of "foreign" names. It is absurd to say in America, peopled by natives of all Europe and their descendants, that Schmitz or O'Brien or Windischgraetz is a foreign name: they are no more foreign than Washington, Adams or Longfellow. Hence the inverted commas, as much as to say, Foreign so called. But as the problem was one that might arise again, and which it was desirable to solve, a radical solution of it was sought; one word had to be found or newcoined to express the notion unequivocally. Such a term probably does not exist in the English vocabulary: at all events no search was made for it among English words.

Plainly, the desired word, the word to be made, must be compounded of Greek elements. Latin elements are even more refractory to compounding than English, German is not inferior to Greek in the agglutinateness of its elements, but a word compacted of Teutonic elements would be German still when made, not English. What was the concept to be expressed? A name originating in a different tongue from ours. The Greek for other or another is *Allos*, and for language *Glossa*. Put the two together and they are self-agglutinated. The word was already made, yes "already," for on consulting the Greek dictionary to see if perchance any one else possessed property in this "new compound" it was found entered to the credit of the Father of History (*Herodotus*) thus: "*Alloglossos*, of a strange or foreign tongue. *Hdt.* 2, 154." Thus, copyright being barred, "*Alloglossic*" is common property—rather say "common good," for "common" and "property" aritate and destroy each other.

128. Why should a person writing in English consider it incumbent on him when naming a Frenchman to style him *Monsieur* (abbreviated *M.*) *So-and-So*, and *Monsieur's* wife as *Mme.*, and their daughter *Mdlle.*? When any sound reason has been assigned for that curious practice, the further question arises, Why style Russians

and Germans in the same Frenchy way? M. de Nesselrode, even (before he became prince) M. de Bismarck? Usually in our newspapers every Italian of any note is Signore, his wife Signora, Spaniards are Senores, Portuguese Senhores. This is absurd. They manage this thing better in France. There a Yankee or an Englishman, German, Chinaman, or man of any other nation or race is Monsieur, and the other appellations or styles of address are bestowed duly in French, according to sex and age. To practice with entire consistency the ridiculous Anglic usage a person must be acquainted with the equivalents of Mr., Mrs. and Miss (these three at least) in the language of the person addressed, and that may easily involve the necessity of being acquainted with these niceties in thirty or forty languages. And, though one may not have occasion himself to use such litanies he must be able to read and understand them in the newspapers. How is the unlearned reader to pronounce Mynheer, Myne Vrouw, and the daughter's appellation, whatever that may be in the language of Paradise, Dutch?

SECTION V. DERIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION.

130. BISHOP. A curious and instructive view of the transformation words undergo in process of time and in their passage from language to language is had in the history of the word *Episcopus*, Lat. form of the Gr. *Episkopos*. Its etymological or original meaning is precisely Overseer; and there was a period in the history of Europe when the overseership of an Italian town was as near an approach to universal domination as the world has yet seen. Between *Episkopos* and Bishop there seems to be little in common, yet the one is a modified form of the other. The sh in "bishop" is only a softening of the sk in "*episkopos*"; hence "bishop" is equivalent to "biskop", which has all the elements of the Gr. word except the termination and the initial vowel. In the Gaelic language *Episcopus* becomes *Espic*, the initial e being retained, but the s transposed. The Scotch and Irish surname Gillespie is in Gaelic *Gillespic*, the bishop's gillie or servant man. The French

"eveque" also retains the initial e, but drops the s, softens the labial p into the labial v, and represents the k sound by qu. In Ital. vescovo, all the elements of episkopos except initial e are retained, but the two explosive labials (p) are changed to the surd labial v. In Spanish the two p's are softened to b and initial e changed to o: obispo. The Portuguese form is bispo: Ger. bischof, Swed. biscof, and Icel. biskup are seen also to retain the principal elements of the Greek word.

131. Dunc. This word has a singular history. For about three hundred years it has been used to denote a man of measureless stupidity. But for more than a hundred years previously Dunc or Duns meant a speculative philosopher of high intellectual acumen. Thus, the meaning has been exactly reversed, and white has become black. John Duns Scotus, a Schoolman of the 14th century, and founder of the philosophical and theological school named after him, the Scotists, was master of all the learning and science of his time, and honestly earned the sobriquet Doctor Subtilis, master of subtleties. The lovers of the new learning in the period of the Renaissance decried all the writings of the Schoolmen, and Duns Scotus, as representative of all that was considered most contemptible in scholasticism,

was the principal object of their sarcasms. At the Reformation the defenders of the ancient religion, with their belated and antiquated scholastic modes of argumentation, were made the laughing stocks of the people as Dunses or Dunces. Nevertheless, no scholar ever regarded the great Schoolmen of the Middle Age—Albertus, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, as mentally obtuse: on the contrary in intellectual acumen they were hardly inferior to their great master, Aristotle.

132. The word Imbecility is hardly used now to express bodily infirmity, but only mental. In earlier English, as in Latin, whence it comes, the noun Imbecility (*imbecillitas*), and the adj. Imbecile (*imbecillus*) denoted physical as well as mental and moral weakness. Imbecile was also formerly used as a verb, and is still so used, but with slightly altered spelling and change of accent, or rather retention of the earlier accent—embezzle. The steps from the Lat. original form to the sinister form embezzle were these: *Imbecillus*, *imbecille* (accent on second syllable), *imbecill* (verb), *imbezill* (verb), *imbezzle*, *embezzle*. The change in meaning took place in the verb in this wise: *Imbecill*, to weaken, then to waste or squander (as an estate, so weakening it); then to take from a treasure or the like intrusted to one's keeping; finally, to appropriate fraudulently. If the

usually received derivation of Lat. Imbecillus is the true one, Imbecile meant originally "leaning on a staff," in bacillum. The Eng. noun is often spelt with two l's—Imbecillity.

133. Idiot. This word also has a curious history. It is from Gr. Idiotes, the primary meaning of which is, person in private station, as distinguished from the man in official or political place. The secondary significance of Idiotes in classic Greek are: Private soldier, plebeian, layman (as opposed to professional man), prose-writer (as opposed to poet); one untrained or unskilled and hence rude, uncultured, awkward, ignorant. The fashion of speech and deportment of the common people, the vulgar, is Idiotismos, idiotism, vulgarism. But Idiotismos never denoted in classic Greek Idiocy, nor did any word formed from Idios or from Idiotes ever signify in that language any lower degree of mentality than boorishness, clownishness. Passing into Latin, Idiotes there became Idiota, meaning an uneducated, ignorant person. Thence migrating into English it held for a little while that sense, and even its original Greek meaning, thus, Jeremy Taylor (d. 1667) writes: "Idiots or private persons." But for Blackstone Idiot is a synonym of "natural fool" or "one that hath no understanding from his nativity."

134. Verse. Etymologically a line of prose is as truly a verse as is a metric or poetical line. Verse (Lat. *versus*) means a turning—turning from the end of one line to the beginning of the next. It is better to call a line of poetry a verse than a line. The reasons of the derivative meanings of Verse are obvious, as when Verse means metrical composition, or a short subdivision of a chapter, or a stanza, or a poem.

135. Quick has gone out of use in its original sense of living, having life; rapid, and prompt to act, are the senses in which the word is now mostly used. To understand the phrases “stung to the quick,” “cut to the quick,” that is, to the sensitive nerves, one needs to be acquainted with the etymological meaning of Quick. Quicksilver is silver that is “alive”; Quicksand is sand that is alive, having apparently a movement of its own. More of the original sense remains in the verb Quicken than in the adjective.

136. Miscreant illustrates in its derivative meanings the prejudice with which we regard those who differ with us in matters of religious belief. Etymologically it means, One who believes amiss, one that is heterodox—“amiss” meaning in the wrong way, i. e., a way different from our way; and “Heterodox” (Gr. *hetera*, the other; *doxa*, opinion) meaning adherent to an

opinion which is not ours: for our opinion is still orthodoxy, yours is heterodoxy. Soon, or simultaneously, Miscreant means "vile wretch, scoundrel, detestable villain." Probably the vocabularies of the ancient Greeks and Latins would be searched in vain for a single instance of a word denoting only difference of opinion putting on the meaning of "outlaw, villain."

137. In English, words that have had that fortune are numerous. Renegade is one who has recanted his religious creed: for that reason solely and purely a Renegade is "a worthless, abandoned fellow, false and traitorous." It would seem to be only a beneficent exercise of the power of life and death if society, the state, should order to the stake or at least to the gibbet, all such worthless, vile, detestable creatures. No more impressive lesson on the danger of Prejudice can be found than might be taught by a catalogue of words like Renegade, Miscreant.

138. Obtain means primarily hold, maintain. Intransitively in this sense it means to hold the ground, to be in possession, as "The belief obtains." The etymology of the word is decisive on this point. *Obtineo*, to obtain in Latin, is from *ob* (against), *teneo* (hold), hence to hold for its own. Secondly, it means to get possession, and this is almost exclusively its meaning in Eng-

lish, the only remnant of the primary meaning being the use of Obtain in such phrases as the one given above.

139. Economy, Political Economy. The etymological meaning of Economy is Housekeeping or management of a household. It is from Gr. Oikos (house) and Nomos (rule, law, administration). Hence though frugality (in the received narrow sense of that word, viz., saving) is an essential part of Economy or household management, it is not its predominant note. Wise direction of domestic servants is as truly and essentially a part of Economy as is frugality. Political Economy is also a Greek phrase in both its parts. But under any of the current definitions of "political" Political Economy seems a misnomer. "Political" means "pertaining to the state," and Household Management" (oikonomia) realized in the state is simply Government in all its departments. If such a thing as Political Economy in any sense justified by the etymology of its terms existed, every interest of the people, state, or "polis" would come within its purview, and the state or government would not be merely a statistician of manufactures, trade, and commerce, nor simply a judge to determine questions of property or rights between non-public parties, nor merely a policeman to maintain the peace, but

would be all in all in the body politic. The current view of Political Economy may be consistent with "public" economy in a loose sense, but in no sense consistent with the notion of "political" household management. The old Roman expression for government, *Res Publica*, involves the idea of Political Economy in its widest, i. e., its true sense; and if in a "republic" any interest of a public nature is taken out of the category *Res Publica*, that republic is so far an oligarchy.

140. Blaspheme with its derivatives is from Gr. *Blasphemeo*, to revile. In Greek the word has no special theological signification, and the Greek who wished to say that a man is guilty of Blasphemy in a sense analogous to that which we give to the word, would have to define the term Blasphemy by adding "eis theous" against the gods. The word comes to us through the Vulgate from the Greek Testament. But with form strangely altered it descended to us through the French language also. Thus we have in our English two lineages of words from the Gr. *Blasphemeo* (v), *Blasphemia* (n). One of these lineages might well be called the legitimate, and the other the illegitimate progeny. As has already been said, the legitimate line clings to the theological sense given to *Blasphemia* in the New Testament; nevertheless, some grecizing English writers ap-

pear to have used the word Blasphemy in the sense of revilement or slander. Thus does the word "revert," as the Darwinists say, "to the ancestral form"; it is a case of "atavism." The atavistic "sport," however, had little vitality, and it is as good as extinct now. Contrariwise the illegitimate line; that appears to have reverted to the ancestral stock very early, and it is still in vigorous condition. Therein it repeats the phenomenon not unfrequently seen in human stocks, the illegitimate progeny showing strong vitality while the legitimate is puny. This illegitimate line had its rise in the Norman French verb *Blasmer* (contr. of *blasphemer*), Fr. *blamer* (circumflex over a): its Eng. form is *Blame*. The meaning of *Blame* is the same as Gr. *Blasphemeo*, *Blasphemia*, but less strong: not reviling, but finding fault, censuring. The illegitimate line is incomparably more fertile of compound and derivative forms than the legitimate.

141. Ecstasy. When we say, He was beside himself, we use a phrase involving the same metaphor which is found in Ecstasy. Ecstasy in the sense of Trance comes to us from the Greek of the New Testament: the Greek classic writers appear to have used the word *ekstasis* only in the sense of transport of rage or excess of Terror. Whether in the "good" sense of Trance or

the "bad" sense of Fit of rage, the fundamental and etymological meaning of the word is Displacement, and in particular Displacement of the mind or senses: one "stands outside himself" (stasis, a standing, ex or exo, without). Ecstasy is of course often used to express very inferior degrees of mental exaltation, but it is still employed to denote the very highest state of Rapture. It is one of the very few words in our language that with age have assumed a larger and a nobler sense than they had in their original tongues.

142. Slander and Scandal are variant forms of the Gr. New Testament word Skandalon. The original meaning of Skandalon is "the stick which carries the bait in a trap"; then Skandalon denoted the trap itself. But according to Liddell and Scott's lexicon, in the New Testament the word means "stumbling block, offense." In the authorized version of the New Testament it is translated everywhere "offense." But etymologically that word offense is synonymous with stumbling block, i. e., it denotes an occasion of stumbling in the moral sense, of causing moral lapses. Hence Scandal (and offense in the New Testament) does not mean offense in the vulgar or common acceptation of Offense—giving umbrage, causing displeasure. Nevertheless, such

is the meaning usually read into both words, as is proved by all the derivative senses of Scandal and offense, and the whole history of the word Slander. The native figurative meaning of the New Testament Gr. verb *skandalizo* is "to lead or tempt into evil by bad example." The pedigree of Slander (v. and n.) is as follows: Lat. *scandalum*, old Fr. *esclandre* (n.), slander.

143. Calumny, challenge. These two words are also variant forms of one original, *Calumnia*, Lat. *Calumny*, since it entered our language has not, in that form, varied in meaning one whit from the Latin, as is made evident by the very unusual and almost unique fact that only one meaning is given it in a very voluminous dictionary. But in another form the word which was in Latin. *Calumnia* (n.) and *Calumniari* (v.) takes on unexpected meanings. Here is the genealogical tree of the very curious word challenge; Lat. *Calumniari*, to calumniate, Ital. *calognare*, Old Span. *calonjar*, Old Fr. *calenger*, *chalonger*, *challenger*, Old Eng., *calangen*, *challengen*; challenge. And the meanings of Challenge (v.) in English, given presumably in historic sequence are: 1 to blame, 2 to claim as a right or due, 3 to invite to a duel, 4 to invite to controversy, 5 to call in question the accuracy of a statement, 6 to call to the performance of a duty, or promise. There

is the chain, or at least some links of a chain. A few links would seem to be missing; the pedigree is badly mutilated.

144. Emery is from Gr. Smyris, having come to us from the lips of people who were unable or reluctant to pronounce the combination *sm* at the beginning of words. Very often the difficulty is overcome by dropping the *s*, as we see in *smelt*, *melt*; quite as often by prefixing a vowel, as *Esmeralda* (Span.) from Gr. *Smaragdon*; or by putting *e* in place of *s*, as in *Emery*, *Emerald*. The reverse operation appears also, some races having a predilection for the combination *sm*: thus Gr. *Myrrha* is in some dialects *smyrrha*, *Mikros*, *smikros*.

145. Clergy, Clerk, Clerical. Everyone knows that these three words are from one root, and that Clerk (in England pronounced *clark*) had once the same significance as Clergyman, the phrase "Clerk in orders" meaning a clergyman who has been "ordained" by a bishop. It might seem tautological to add to Clerk (clergyman) the phrase "in orders", and so indeed, it is, for it is "order" that makes the clergyman now. But the phrase is a survival from times when Clergy denoted the status of a man who has taken the first step in the ecclesiastical career, who has received Tonsure, a rite in the Roman Church disused in

the English Establishment. Tonsure is not "order," but the tonsured man was Clerk, of the Clergy, though not yet Clerk in Orders: he was Simple Clerk (*simplex clericus*). Even after the tonsured man had been initiated in as many as four "orders" (minor orders, distinguished from "sacred orders," Diaconate, Priesthood, and from the Subdiaconate, which is not held by all theologians to belong to the "sacred" category) he was not yet Clerk in Orders, for in that phrase "orders" means "sacred orders." The root of the matter we have in the Gr. word *Kleros* (Lat. *clerus*), meaning Lot, Portion of an Inheritance. How *Clerus* came to mean Clergy as distinguished from Laity (Gr. *Laos*, people) was on this wise. The body of ministers, preachers and teachers in the Christian Church was at an early period of the Church's history, if not indeed from the beginning, regarded as a distinct order, of divine institution, a priestly and levitical order of which the Aaronic priesthood and the levites were a type and a figure. And as "the Lord spake unto Aaron . . . I am thy part and thine inheritance"—in the Septuagint *Kleronomia* (Numb., 18, 20); and as (Deut. 18, 2) it was provided that the tribe of Levi should "have no inheritance (*kleros*) among their brethren," for "the Lord is their inheritance" (*kleros*): so in Chris-

DERIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION.

tendom the sacerdotal order is supposed to have "the Lord for their inheritance", and the word for inheritance became the name of their whole body. When a man is inducted into Clergy by the rite of Tonsure in the Roman Catholic Church he pronounces from one of David's Psalms (16, 5) the words, *Dominus pars haereditatis meae et calicis mei*, The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup.

146. Ethics. It is not by accident that in Greek, Latin, German, and the languages derived from them—indeed, perhaps, in all languages—the terms used to designate the notion *Morals* or *Morality*, all mean etymologically *Custom*, *Usage*, *Habitude*. The Gr. word *Ethos* (plur. *ethea* or *ethe*), whence *Ethics*, seems originally to have signified accustomed seat or abode, haunts of beasts, then haunts of men. Its general meaning was custom, usage. The original meaning of Lat. *Mos* (plur. *Mores*) whence *Morals*, would seem to be manner, custom, way, without any connotation of "moral law." The Ger. *Sitte* (plur. *sitten*) also means originally Custom, manner, usual way. If history and geographical exploration had not taught us that *Morality* varies, and ever has varied according to latitude and longitude, the aspects of nature, and man's physical, mental, and economic

surroundings, Language is there, like the geologic formations of past ages, to demonstrate the truth. Viewed simply as a question of language quite apart from ideas (if the supposition were conceivable) the expression "absolute ethics" is a contradiction of terms, being comparable to such an expression as Unconditioned Conditioned or Conditioned Absolute. In the domain of morals nations have acted toward foreign nations as they have acted in the domain of language. The Greeks and Romans called the nations whose languages they could not understand Jabberers, or, as they expressed it, Barbari: those languages were for the Greeks no languages at all. Of course, the Customs of the Barbari were, in the eyes of the Greeks, unethic, immoral. For us the Ethic of the ancient Hellenes is immoral. To the unlettered English-speaking person the language of Dante sounds like gibberish: in the eyes of the insular John Bull the customs of "the Continent" are highly immoral.

147. In Squirrel little is left of the original form of the singularly poetic name of the blithe little creature, in Greek, Skiuros, shadow-tail. But perhaps "it is a mercy" that the innumerable metaphors and other incidental beauties of language have lost their life and color, else we might be so beguiled by the panorama unrolled before

our eyes in the picturesque words that we should be unable to attend to the subject-matter of any discourse.

148. Atonement is a curious word. First, it consists of the two Eng. words At and One ("at one" meaning reconciled) and the termination "ment." The word meant exactly reconcilement. But straightway it assumed a secondary meaning, Expiation, which in common usage has quite driven the original meaning out. It is an awkwardly constructed word, and in its original sense there was no need for it, for the language already possessed Reconciliation 'and' Reconcilement. Then, if a new word must needs be contrived would not Onement (pron. 1-ment) have been very much better ~~that~~ at-one-ment? But there was a Saxon verb "to one", and an equally genuine Saxon verbal noun Oneing. The transformation of meaning from reconcilement to expiatory sacrifice is very curious but not unique: there is, perhaps, no phenomenon of growth, development, or change in any language but finds a parallel in all others. In Latin the word Religio has about the same meaning as Religion with us; but among the Romans "religio" was used almost as a technical expression for violation of religion, and strange to say the word in the meanwhile never lost its original signification of respect for

the gods. A like use of a word in two directly opposite senses is seen in the adjective *Sacer* (sacred, but also accurst). In Greek, *Anathema* meant "votive offering"; but in the Greek of the New Testament the same word means always a thing accurst. And though in the Septuagint the verb *Anathematizo* means "to devote", "to consecrate", in the New Testament it means only "to curse".

149. *Welter*. This word is used now only in the phrase "weltering in his blood". As with the word *Reeking* in the phrase "Reeking with filth", it is probable that few of those who use the word *Weltering* have any conception of its meaning. See *Reeking*, par. 52. *Welter* (v.) means to roll, kick, sprawl, etc., as a stuck pig; to wallow. It is co-radical with Ger. *Waelzen* (v.) which has the same meanings. From *Waelzen* comes the name of a manner of dancing, so called—the *Waltz*: quasi *Wallow-dance*; or if that mode of forming a word is not according to the principles of English etymology, then the *Wallowing-Dance*. The verb *Wallow* has no necessary implication or connotation of mire or filth to roll or toss in. Wiclef's translation of the passage in Matthew's Gospel, which tells of the rolling of a stone into the entrance to Jesus' sepulchre has, He walewide (wallowed) a gret stoon to the dore of the biriel and went away.

150. Deal as used at the card table and Deal in the phrase "a great deal" are one word. It is of the same origin as Ger. *Teil*, and originally had the same meaning; viz. Part. Hence to deal was to divide; and when cards are dealt they are divided into portions. Dealer would seem to be equivalent to Retailer. In single combat one combatant does not deal blows on (to) the other, for he gives them all to him. It is different in battle: there the warrior deals his blows and thrusts impartially to (on) all the foes that come within his reach. The phrase "he writes a deal" is not equivalent, etymologically, to "he writes a great deal." The first time that "a deal" was written or spoken in the sense of "much" the expression was a solecism: it is still a faulty phrase, and is to be rejected, whatever authority it may appear to have in usage. Crabb (*Dict. of Synonyms*) says: "Deal always denotes something great." That is not so, as the almost invariable custom of adding "great" to it to give it magnitude clearly proves. Crabb's remark confirms what was said in Section I. of the dying out of the tradition of Anglosaxon etymology among the English people after the conquest.

151. Particle means in the literal sense a minute portion of a material substance and figuratively a very small part, a point, of things not

material: as we say, He has not a particle of honor. But the negative phrase, Not a particle, is often used improperly as though it were at all points synonymous with that other, Not at all: e. g., Are the streets muddy to-day? Not a particle. Were you hurt by the fall? Not a particle.

152. Decimation, among the ancient Romans, was the selecting by lot from a corps of mutinous soldiers or from a vanquished enemy every tenth man for capital punishment. Hence the proper meaning of Decimate (v.) is to destroy one in every ten. In a loose sense it is used to signify slaying a large number. The idea of one of every ten, inherent in the word (decem, ten, decimus, tenth) must never be lost from sight when we speak of decimating. It would be absurd to say, The army was utterly (or terribly) decimated: "literally" would be the right word. If either a much smaller or a much larger proportion than ten per cent. is destroyed, the killing is not a Decimation. If we must have a word in "ation", we may say Quindecimation (one in fifteen), Quintation (one in five), Octavation (one in eight), and so on.

153. Singular, as long as it was used in its etymological sense, meant precisely what Unique means, viz., alone in its kind of excellence. As

late as Addison's time it had that signification: "These busts . . . are all very scarce, and some of them almost singular in their kind." Instead of "almost singular" one would incline now to say "most singular", a phrase impossible in Addison's day. With the radical Single, meaning One only, before their eyes, it is unaccountable that educated writers should have so weakened the import of Singular as to make it mean only Extraordinary. But its native import is clean gone, and one needs a glossary to-day to tell him what the word means in an author of less than 150 years ago. The using of Singular in the sense of Unusual only adds one more to a string of synonyms already overlong, leaving a vacancy that had to be filled with that "almost singular" word Unique. How long till that, too, shall join the majority. When it does somebody will, perhaps, invent the form "oneic."

154. Scruple is from Lat. *Scrupulus*, which means a small, sharp or pointed pebble, such as might get into one's shoe, causing more or less annoyance. In a metaphorical sense the Romans used the word to signify uneasiness, discomfort, worry. Among moralists it came to mean anxious hesitation about the righteousness of an act or course of conduct, and in particular worry of conscience without reasonable cause. It is not

a desirable nor a commendable state of conscience, being too near allied to hypochondria: it is a lamentable weakness and not at all a virtue. Scruple and scrupulousness have this meaning everywhere, and such is their definition in dictionaries. Nevertheless, when the epithet Unscrupulous is applied to a man the probability is that the intention is to accuse him of total lack of moral principle. And the phrase "without scruple" is employed by the best writers in the sense of "Remorselessly", thus Macaulay: "He broke through the most sacred ties without scruple or shame", where, of course, Scruple must mean "regard to right of duty". It cannot mean there nicety, or tenderness, or timorousness of conscience.

155. Starve is the same word as Ger. Sterben, and long had the same signification, to Die. Chaucer has, He that starf for our redemption (starf, died). The phrase, To starve for cold, is still in use. And when Shakespeare writes, The air hath starved the roses in her cheeks, he means of course "hath killed." Milton uses Starve in the same sense: To starve in ice their soft ethereal warmth. The word Starvation was first used in 1775, and though it is a mongrel vocable, it very soon found acceptance as expressing in one word "the extremity of destitution, extreme suffering

from the want of food". Misere in French cannot express greater destitution than "the extremity", yet Prof. Huxley seems to take some credit for Anglosaxondom that there is no word in English capable of expressing the full meaning of *la misere*. If *la misere* denotes and connotes, besides extreme hunger, cold also, so does Starvation; if rags, so does Starvation; if depravation of human feelings and instincts, so does Starvation; if huddling and pigging, so does Starvation. In the face of *La Misere*, as of Starvation, the decencies of life vanish, and man is a mere animal, but not a noble animal. The vowel change seen in *Sterben*, *Starve*, is very common, e. g. Ger. *Stern*, Eng. *Star*, clerk, clark, learn, larn, Vernon, Var-num and Barnum.

156. Contagion. If Lat. *Contagium* and Eng. *Contagion* had continued to be what they originally were, "indifferent", i. e., signifying mere contact, with the effects of contact both good and evil, we should be using the phrase, "Contagion of good example"; and a very true and forceful phrase it would be. But just as we have ten thousand words to denote our physical and mental diseases and troubles, but very few indeed to denote the opposite favorable conditions, so it is with regard to our terminology to express the influence

of good and bad example. Nor is the defect in our terminology alone: it exists in our thoughts—indeed, how could it be in the terminology had it not been first in the thoughts? Of the contagiousness of bad example no one doubts: how few there are who have faith in the contagiousness of good, of virtue. And yet if the good is not very much more powerful than the evil the human race were lost long ago. It would be a gain if we could import into our language and into our thoughts the notion of a powerful contagion of virtue. The worst Pessimism of all is to despair of the contagion of the good.

157. Assassin. This word is by some etymologists derived from the name of Hassan ben Sabah, founder of the militant religious order of the Hashishin (Assassins); more probable is the derivation from Hashish, an inspissated decoction of hemp. The Hashishin, like desperadoes in some Oriental lands to-day, used to prepare for the commission of deeds of daring by drinking of the hashish liquor. As the taking of hashish even in considerable quantity and habitually, does not appear to have that effect on men of European race, it is highly probable that the reckless fury of the Hashishin, supposed to be inspired by hashish, was, in fact, a result of what is called by hypnotists and mesmerists Sugges-

tion, or more specifically, Self-Suggestion (in French Auto-Suggestion). Certainly the state produced by hashish in many respects resembles hypnotic trance. The person who is in hypnotic or in mesmeric trance executes the commands given to him, whatever they may be, if only they be physically possible. Probably when the trance state is produced by the use of the drug, suggestion may have a like effect.

158. Rase and Raze (verbs), pronounced alike though spelt differently, are one word, from the Lat. verb *Rado* (participle *rasus*), to scrape. Razor has the same origin. In that fact we have a measure of the vainglory of the male human biped in primordial times before razor knives were invented; for the feminine anatomy suffers not so much from tight-laced stays and baby-sized boots as those primitive dandies suffered from the scrapers of flint, or, perhaps, the pumice rubbers with which they subdued the scraggy stubble of their beard. Erase and Razee have the same origin as Rase.

159. Ambuscade is exactly equivalent in etymology to Bushwhacking. The very word Bush exists in both, though in Ambuscade it has the Romanic form of *Busco* or *Bosco*, but in Bushwhacking the Teutonic form *Bush* or *Busch*. Ambuscade is defined to be "a military device",

a stratagem of what is styled "honorable warfare". The same definition stands for Ambush. Bushwhacking or Bushwhackery gets probably a very different definition.

SECTION VI. FALSE LIGHTS.

160. HERE are a few words that hang out False Lights to the unwary or ignorant etymologizer, thus luring him into shallows where he suffers shipwreck of what little store of knowledge of the Mothertongue he had from nature or nurture. Better steer by dead reckoning than by such jack o' lanthorn lights. These instances of ridiculous etymologies have an interest for us historically, for until comparatively recent times even the learned assigned to words derivations as absurd as those suggested by such words as "Egg on", "Nag", etc.

161. Explode. When we speak of Exploding a fallacy or a story, the word Explode is used metaphorically, but the metaphor is a transference of a notion not from gunnery or from blasting, but from the theatre. An audience in a theatre expresses satisfaction or approval by plaudits, i. e., by hand clapping, stamping, shouting, and the like, and plaud is from Lat. *plaudo*. That verb, compounded with *Ex* (out) and the diphthong *au* changed to *o*, gives *Explodo*, "to

plaudit out" or off the stage: to drive the actors off the stage by noisy demonstrations. But usage will, no doubt, finally displace this ancient metaphorical meaning of Explode and substitute for it the notion of planting an explosive cartridge under a story, under a "campaign lie" for example, and blowing it to pieces.

162. Curate, Cure of Souls. By an obvious process the verb Cure (Lat. curo, from the same original source as Anglosaxon caru, anxiety), which meant primarily to care for, as a physician does, or a nurse, came to denote making whole or healing, that being what is expected of the leech, and what he is supposed to do. (And obiter be it noted that Leech, term denoting Physician, is a sort of False Light, for one is tempted to derive it from the name of a worm of the bloodsucking kind. But the fact is otherwise. The word etymologically belongs to the Physician: the figurative use of it is its application to *Hirudo medicinalis*, "the Doctor"). To the honor of the medical profession it must be confessed that in all probability the change in the meaning of Cure, from Caring to Healing or making whole, was not effected by practicers of the healing art, but by their ignorant clients: even so, too, the redoubtable portent of priestcraft is the work of ignorance and superstition

in the people rather than of lust of power on the part of their religious guides. For the people love to be humbugged—*populus vult decipi*: and the priest can only say Amen, *decipiatur*—humbugged let them be. Cure of souls means Care of souls; and Curate means one charged with a care of souls. In French the etymological equivalent of Curate is Cure (acute accent on the e, Lat. *Curatus*), but in Italian and Spanish the word is Cura (literally Care, so called as we call petty magistrates and high judges Justices). But whereas in English use Curate means assistant rector of a parish, the French etymological equivalent means Rector, Parish Priest. The employment of the word Curate as designation of the assistant “crystallizes” a whole history of simonies. It is reminiscent of a state of things in which one man had all the honors and emoluments of a church benefice, while a pittance locum tenens or substitute had all the work and all the care.

162. Adust. This word might easily be mistaken for a compound of the order of Awry, Acold, Alone; but it is no Anglosaxon word at all, but Latin, nor has it anything to do with Dust, being the past participle of the verb *Aduro* (to burn), *Adustus*. Milton applies the epithet *Adust* to air:

And vapor as the Libyan air adust,
Began to parch that temperate clime.

He also uses *Adust* as a verb: *Concocted* and *adusted*.

163. *Tinsel* etymologically has nothing to do with *Tin*. It is out of Lat. *Scintilla* (accent on second syllable) through Fr. *etincelle*, both meaning a spark. *Scintillare* (Lat.) *etinceler* (Fr.) to sparkle. In English *Tinsel* meant originally a cloth shot with threads of silver or gold.

164. *Broil*, *Embroid*. Between these and *Broil* in the sense of roasting over hot coals there is no etymological relation. *Broil* (v.) comes into English from French, and there has the form *Brouiller*, meaning to entangle, to jumble; to mix confusedly. A *Broil* is a tumult; a scrimmage, a disturbance. To *embroil* is to put in a *Broil*, to tangle, to confuse, to involve in a quarrel or tangle of dissentient opinions. *Imbroglia* is Italian for embroilment or broil.

165. *Humble Bee*. *Humble* is a *False Light*. The *Humble Bee* is no lowlier than the Italian *Bee*. Her name ought to be written *Hummel Bee* or *Bumble Bee*, for it is a name that imitates the hurtling of the *Bee* in her flight. The Lat. name of insects of the genus to which this *bee* belongs is also imitative, viz., *Bombus*: so, too,

are the French and German names, viz., Hummel and Bourdon.

166. Wiseacre is etymologically the same word as Ger. Weissager, prophet, soothsayer. At one time it was in good repute in English, and meant Wiseman, man of learning, philosopher: e. g., Pythagoras lerned muche . . . becomming a myghtye wysacre.

167. Egg (v.) and Edge would seem to be the same word, the hard palatal g of Egg being softened in Edge. Allied words in German are Eck (corner), Ecke (edge, angle), ecken (to border). From the same common root are Gr. ake and akis (point, spear, edge), Lat. Acies (edge), Lat. Acus (needle), Lat. Acuo (to sharpen, whence Acutus, pointed, Eng. Acute, Acumen, etc.). The meaning of the verb Egg or Egg on is, therefore, to goad, to prick.

168. Necromancy was a False Light to our medieval forbears. It came to be called Black Art through a confounding of the first two syllables, Necro (dead, Gr.) with Nigro (black, Lat.), the result being Nigromancy, the Black Divination. The Gr. word Nekromanteia means Divination by the Dead, namely by responses from the departed (nekroi). But Nigromancy (nigromantia) is divination by "the Blacks". Trench quotes from a vocabulary of the 15th century,

Nigromantia dicitur divinatio facta per nigros, Nigromancy is the name of divination done by the blacks, i. e., by daemons or Devils.

169. Nag (v.) is only another and stronger form of Gnaw, used in a metaphorical sense. The same form of word being used to designate a sorry horse that needs much urging with whip, stick, and spur, the verb Nag doubtless passes with many for a verbal use of the noun. The Ger. *Nagen* (v.) is the exact equivalent of Gnaw: like Gnaw it means only Nibble, but not teasing, ceaseless fault finding, etc. The noun Nag (horse) is possibly an imitative word from Neigh, in which word the guttural indicated by gh was formerly sounded.

170. Wedlock. The last syllable of this word, and the idea of marriage being a Bond and the bethrothed being Handfast, are likely to suggest the notion of bolts or locks. But the "lock" in Wedlock signifies delight, pleasure, a gift in token of pleasure: it is reminiscent of the ancient practice of giving to the bride a gift on the morning after the marriage.

171. Porcupine. When one sees this word spelt Porkpine in some old author, one might perhaps suspect a vulgar error and a False Light comparable to what we see in "sparrowgrass" for Asparagus. (Obiter. The French have also got

out of "asparagus" a False Light word—asperges, which is also the name of the sprinkler with which a priest besprinkles a congregation with "holywater"). But the "Pork" in Porkpine is there by highest right, and it is no vulgar error. Pork (or what is the same, pig) is in the word Porcupine, however the word is spelt: the departure from the original form is rather in the last syllable, "pine". The elements of the word are Lat. Porcus (pig) and spina (thorn); hence Porcupine is "thorny or spinous pig." The dropping of s in the latter half of the word is due to the phenomenon elsewhere mentioned in these notes, viz., a certain inability to pronounce the combination sp.

172. Cordwainer, as a word, has no relation to cords, not even to waxed ends. The word is from Cordwain a whimsical spelling of Cordovan (old Fr. Cordouan), originally a tanned goatskin (now frequently split horsehide leather) brought from Cordova, in Spain. The Cordovan or Cordwain leather being of superior quality every cobbler would naturally inscribe on his sign "Cordwain stock", and so would himself get the name Cordwainer. One may see Leghorn written Leg Horn, and probably Leg Horn fowls are supposed to owe the name to some peculiarity of their legs.

173. Nerve, when found in old writers, is a False Light. Till comparatively recent times Eng. Nerve, like Lat. Nervus and Gr. Neuros, meant, not one of the fibres or minute tubules which form the means of communication between the brain and the body's superficies and the muscles, but only Sinew, Tendon. Accordingly most of the older derivatives of Nerve have only or chiefly the latter connotation in literature. "His nervous feet" (Wordsworth) means sinewy, muscular; "the nervous crossbow", strung with sinew; "nervous style", vigorous. A hundred and fifty years ago the expression "a nervous, timid creature" would be regarded as a contradiction in terms—equal to "a weak, muscular creature". It is well to bear this in mind when reading works more than a century old.

174. Spittle. When in a petition addressed to King James I., one comes upon the phrase "like spittle-men, wearing rags", not improbably that enlightened prince's Counterblast to Tobacco occurs to the mind at the same time, and a ludicrous suspicion that these spittle-men may, perhaps, have been users of "the weed". To harbor such opinion would be to be lured by False Lights. By Spittle-men is meant inmates of Hospitals (spitals) lazarettos, or refuges for the poor. By the way, it is curious that the lazaretto or lazaret-

house or hospital for the poor is to this day, a couple of thousand years after Jesus had honored Lazarus with his special regard, about the same sort of an institution as it may have been in Jesus' time. It hardly does honor to the Founder of Christianity that abominable pest houses should be called by the name of his friend Lazarus—or that under whatever name the refuges of the unfortunate should be hideous prison pens.

175. Weeds. The Weed in which the widow is attired is assumed to be the same etymologically as weed, "a plant out of its place", as though the garb of mourning typified a vesture of weeds. But though written and pronounced alike the two Weeds have no kinship to each other. In Anglo-saxon Woed means garment, clothing. Weed is akin to Wind (v., long i), and to Ger. Gewand (garment). One of the pre-Jacobean translations of the New Testament (Udal's) has: Another of the Pharissaicall sorte goying in a white wede (Luke 19); and Milton has

Dying put on the weeds of Dominic; i. e., the habit of the Friars Preachers.

INDEX.

*** The numbers refer to the paragraphs.

- abstruse 50.
- acute 167.
- adjective and adverb 86,
89.
- adust 162.
- affiliate 40.
- ago 95.
- aliunde 119.
- alloglossic 127.
- all right 66.
- allude 45.
- ambuscade 159.
- anthemia 148.
- animalculum 112.
- any one else's 105
- apparatus 117.
- approved (of) 94.
- aquarium 112.
- as, that 87.
- asparagus 171.
- asperges 171.
- assassin 157.
- atonement 148.
- attract 17.
- auto-suggestion 157.
- Bacillus 111.
- bacterium 111.
- bad cold 66.
- balance 30.
- beastly drunk 77.
- bifurcate dilemma 56.
- bisbo 130.
- bischof 130.
- bishop 130.
- by brevet 123.
- black art 168.
- blame 140.
- blarney 125.
- blaspheme 140.
- Bluecher 126.
- bombus 165.
- borrowed plumage 78.
- bourdon 165.
- bravo 118.
- broil 164.
- bushwhacking 159.
- by all means 98.
- by any chance 99.

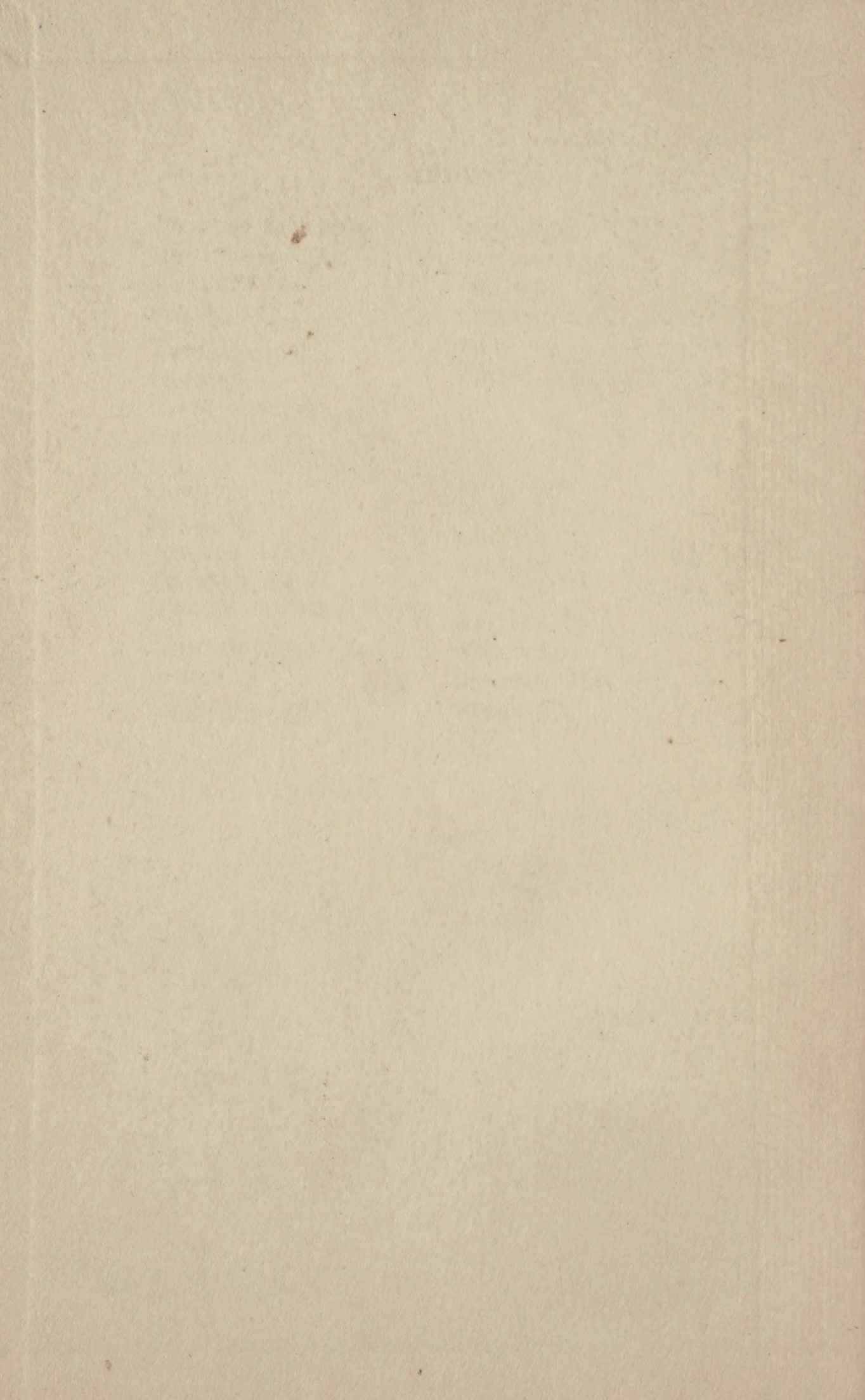
- Calumny 143.
 candelabrum 112.
 challenge 143.
 circumambient 63.
 civility 38.
 clergy 145.
 clerk 145.
 cloture 122.
 congress 101.
 conscience, grammatical 104.
 consensus 24.
 conservatine 13.
 contagion 156.
 cordwainer 172.
 co-respondent 27.
 coup de soleil 121.
 cover (v.) 57.
 cure, curate 162.
 cyclopedia 22.
 Datum 112.
 dead letter 32.
 deal 150.
 dear cost 80.
 deathly sick 66.
 decimate 152.
 deprecate, depreciate 36.
 diatribe 61.
 dilemma 56.
 dilettante 118.
 disembody 106.
 do away 94.
 domestic 10.
 done 87.
 dunce 131.
 Economy 139.
 ecstasy 141.
 edge 167.
 egg (v.) 167.
 embezzle 132.
 embroil 164.
 emerald 144.
 emery 144.
 empiric 65.
 encyclopedia 22.
 enough 97.
 entail 20.
 episcopus 130.
 equally as 68.
 ethics 146.
 eveque 130.
 every on (plur.) 91.
 every other 79.
 every time 66.
 excelsior 23.
 excepto probat regulam 81.
 exercitus 117.
 expire 44.
 explode 161.
 extra 60.
 eyes, room in the 76.
 Faure 126.
 feathering the nest 78

- flippant 54.
 formula 114.
 fruition 59.
 Getting religion 74.
 Gillespie 130.
 given leave 108.
 going on 10 yrs. 96.
 going to go 68.
 go to work 69.
 grammar 100.
 Grouchy 126.
 Habeas corpus 119.
 handicap 41.
 hashish 157.
 here where there is 110.
 heterodox 136.
 heterophemy 37.
 hisher 91.
 host 55.
 humble bee 165.
 hummel 165.
 humoristic English 43.
 hypothesis 35.
 hypothecate *ib.*
 Identify 27.
 idiot 133.
 ignoramus 115.
 ignorantism 12.
 imbecile 132.
 incognito 118.
 infringe 94.
 in partibus infidelium 123.
 in petto 121.
 in the event that 99.
 ironworks (*sing.*) 90.
 Just as good 66.
 Kleptomania 37.
 Laity 145.
 La Rochelle 125.
 lazaretto 174.
 learn, teach 107.
 leech 162.
 Leg Horn 172.
 lie, lay 107.
 Magnate 29.
 make up mind 69.
 mandamus 15.
 menschenhass 9.
 miasma 114.
 miscreant 136.
 misere 155.
 M. (*monsieur*), Mme., 128.
 moral 146.
 mynheer, myne vrouw 128.
 Nag 169.
 near 93.
 necromancy 168.
 nee 121.
 nerve 173.
 nice 66.
 nigromancy 168.
 no end of trouble 96.

- nonplus 64.
 no one (plur.) 91.
 Obispo 130.
 obtain 138.
 omnibus 115.
 oneing 148.
 only 84.
 only too willing 72.
 or, nor 67.
 orders 145.
 orthodox 136.
 Particle 151.
 particularly and peculiar-
 ly 43.
 phalanx 28.
 phenomenon 14.
 place 46, 49.
 plasma 114.
 pleasant 48.
 polite 37.
 political economy 139.
 political policy 62.
 porcupine 171.
 position 49.
 possessive case 92.
 posted 31.
 president 102.
 prestige 26; prestidigita-
 tion ib.
 privilege 103.
 punctuation 109.
 Queen 102.
 quick 135.
 Radius 113.
 rase, raze 158.
 razor 158.
 real good 66.
 reeking 52.
 refer 45.
 religio 148.
 renegade 137.
 res publica 139.
 rhinoceros 113.
 Rothschild 126.
 royal navy 102.
 Sacer 148.
 scandal 142.
 scholastics 131.
 scruple 154.
 secure 34.
 self-suggestion 157.
 share 19.
 singular 153.
 sitten 146.
 slander 142.
 sleuth 47.
 sodden 51.
 solid 66.
 squirrel 147.
 standing 25.
 starve 155.
 stratum 112.
 Sadi-Carnot 126.
 scintilla 163.
 set, sit 107.
 simony 161.

INDEX.

- sparrowgrass 171.
spittle-men 174.
spoonful 104.
stigma 114.
Tantalize 53.
teem 15.
ten ft. water 90.
terrifically 75.
that depends 71.
tinsel 163.
to 68, 88.
tonsure 145.
transpire 44.
trustees ex maleficio 73.
Unscrupulous 154.
urbane 38.
Venerable 18.
verse 134.
vescovo 134.
vim 53.
virtuoso 118.
vivid 33.
viscus 113.
Wage 16.
wallow 149.
waltz 149.
wedlock 170.
weeds 175.
welter 149.
went 87.
we was 87.
who, whom 85.
wiseacre 166.
wreak 39.



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